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# A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

## CHAPTER VIII.

DR. STAINES begged leave to distinguish: he had not said he would set up a carriage at the first one hundred guinea fee, but only that he would not set one up before. There are misguided people who would call this logic: but Rosa said it was equivocating, and urged him so warmly that at last he burst out, 'Who can go on for ever saying "no," to the only creature he loves?'—and caved. In forty-eight hours more a brougham waited at Mrs. Staines' door. The servant engaged to drive it was Andrew Pearman, a bachelor, and, hitherto, an undergroom. He readily consented to be coachman, and do certain domestic work as well. So Mrs. Staines had a man servant as well as a carriage.

Ere long, three or four patients called, or wrote, one after the other. These Rosa set down to brougham, and crowded; she even crowded to Lady Cicely Treherne, to whose influence, and not to brougham's, every one of these patients was owing. Lady Cicely kissed her, and demurely enjoyed the poor soul's self-satisfaction.

Staines himself, while he drove to or from these patients, felt more sanguine, and, buoyed as he was by the consciousness of ability, began to hope he had turned the corner.

He sent an account of Lord Ayscough's case to a medical ma-

gazine; and so full is the world of flunkeyism, that this article, though he withheld the name, retaining only the title, got the literary wedge in for him at once; and in due course, he became a paid contributor to two medical organs, and used to study and write more, and indent the little stone yard less, than heretofore.

It was about this time circumstances made him acquainted with Phoebe Dale. Her intermediate history I will dispose of in fewer words than it deserves. Her ruin, Mr. Reginald Falcon, was dismissed from his club, for marking high cards on the back with his nail. This stopped his remaining resource—borrowing; so he got more and more out at elbows, till at last, he came down to hanging about billiard-rooms, and making a little money by concealing his game; from that, however, he rose to be a marker.

Having culminated to that, he wrote and proposed marriage to Miss Dale, in a charming letter: she showed it to her father, with pride.

Now, if his vanity, his disloyalty, his falsehood, his ingratitude, and his other virtues had not stood in the way, he would have done this three years ago, and been jumped at.

But the offer came too late; not for Phoebe—she would have taken him in a moment—but for

her friends. A baited hook is one thing, a bare hook is another. Farmer Dale had long discovered where Phoebe's money went: he said not a word to her; but went up to town like a shot; found Falcon out, and told him he mustn't think to eat his daughter's bread. She should marry a man that could make a decent livelihood; and if she was to run away with him, why they'd starve together. The farmer was resolute, and spoke very loud, like one that expects opposition, and comes prepared to quarrel. Instead of that, this artful rogue addressed him with deep respect, and an affected veneration, that quite puzzled the old man; acquiesced in every word, expressed contrition for his past misdeeds, and told the farmer he had quite determined to labour with his hands. 'You know, farmer,' said he, 'I am not the only gentleman who has come to that in the present day. Now, all my friends, that have seen my sketches, assure me I am a born painter; and a painter I'll be—for love of Phoebe.'

The farmer made a wry face. 'Painter! that is a sorry sort of a trade.'

'You are mistaken. It's the best trade going. There are gentlemen making their thousands a year by it.'

'Not in our parts, there bain't. Stop a bit. What be ye going to paint, sir? Housen, or folk?'

'Oh, hang it, not houses. Figures, landscapes.'

'Well, ye might just make shift to live at it, I suppose, with here and there a sign-board. They are the best paid, our way: but, Lord bless ye, *they* wants head-piece. Well, sir, let me see your work. Then we'll talk further.'

'I'll go to work this afternoon,' said Falcon, eagerly; then with affected surprise, 'Bless me; I

forgot. I have no palette, no canvas, no colours. You couldn't lend me a couple of sovereigns to buy them, could you?'

'Ay, sir. I could. But I woan't. I'll lend ye the things, though, if you have a mind to go with me and buy 'em.'

Falcon agreed, with a lofty smile; and the purchases were made.

Mr. Falcon painted a landscape or two out of his imagination. The dealers to whom he took them, declined them; one advised the gentleman painter to colour tea-boards; 'That's your line,' said he.

'The world has no taste,' said the gentleman painter: 'but it has got lots of vanity: I'll paint portraits.'

He did; and formidable ones: his portraits were amazingly like the people, and yet unlike men and women, especially about the face. One thing, he didn't trouble with lights and shades, but went slap at the features.

His brush would never have kept him; but he carried an instrument, in the use of which he really was an artist, viz. his tongue. By wheedling and underselling—for he only charged a pound for the painted canvas—he contrived to live; then he aspired to dress as well as live. With this second object in view, he hit upon a characteristic expedient.

He used to prowl about, and when he saw a young woman sweeping the afternoon streets with a long silk train, and, in short, dressed to ride in the park, yet parading the streets, he would take his hat off to her with an air of profound respect, and ask permission to take her portrait. Generally he met a prompt rebuff; but, if the fair was so unlucky as to hesitate a single moment, he told her a melting tale; he had

once driven his four-in-hand; but by endorsing his friends' bills, was reduced to painting likenesses, admirable likenesses in oils, only a guinea each.

His piteous tale provoked more jibes than pity; but as he had no shame, the rebuffs went for nothing: he actually did get a few sitters by his audacity: and some of the sitters actually took the pictures, and paid for them; others declined them with fury as soon as they were finished. These he took back with a piteous sigh, that sometimes extracted half-a-crown. Then he painted over the rejected one and let it dry; so that sometimes a paid portrait would present a beauty enthroned on the debris of two or three rivals, and that is where few beauties would object to sit.

All this time he wrote nice letters to Phoebe, and adopted the tone of the struggling artist, and the true lover, who wins his bride by patience, perseverance, and indomitable industry; a babbled of 'Self Help.'

Meantime, Phoebe was not idle: an excellent business woman, she took immediate advantage of a new station, that was built near the farm, to send up milk, butter, and eggs to London. Being genuine, they sold like wildfire. Observing that, she extended her operations, by buying of other farmers, and forwarding to London: and then, having of course an eye to her struggling artist, she told her father she must have a shop in London, and somebody in it she could depend upon.

'With all my heart, wench,' said he; 'but it must not be thou. I can't spare thee.'

'May I have Dick, father?'

'Dick! he is rather young.'

'But he is very quick, father, and minds every word I tell him.'

'Ay, he is as fond of thee as

ever a cow was of a calf. Well, you can try him.'

So the lovesick woman of business set up a little shop, and put her brother Dick in it, and all to see more of her struggling artist. She stayed several days, to open the little shop, and start the business. She advertised pure milk, and challenged scientific analysis of everything she sold. This came of her being a reader; she knew, by the journals, that we live in a sinful and adulterating generation; and anything pure must be a god-send to the poor poisoned public.

Now, Dr. Staines, though known to the profession as a diagnost, was also an analyst, and this challenge brought him down on Phoebe Dale. He told her he was a physician, and in search of pure food for his own family—would she really submit the milk to analysis?

Phoebe smiled an honest country smile, and said, 'Surely, sir.' She gave him every facility, and he applied those simple tests which are commonly used in France, though hardly known in England.

He found it perfectly pure, and told her so; and gazed at Phoebe for a moment, as a phenomenon.

She smiled again at that, her broad country smile. 'That is a wonder in London, I dare say. It's my belief half the children that die here are perished with watered milk. Well, sir, we shan't have that on our souls, father and I; he is a farmer in Essex. This comes a many miles, this milk.'

Staines looked in her face, with kindly approval marked on his own eloquent features. She blushed a little, at so fixed a regard. Then he asked her if she would supply him with milk, butter, and eggs.

'Why, if you mean sell you them, yes, sir, with pleasure. But for sending them home to you in



this big town, as some do, I can't; for there's only brother Dick and me: it is an experiment like.'

'Very well,' said Staines: 'I will send for them.'

'Thank you kindly, sir. I hope you won't be offended sir; but we only sell for ready money.'

'All the better: my order at home is, no bills.'

When he was gone, Phoebe, assuming vast experience, though this was only her third day, told Dick that was one of the right sort: 'and oh, Dick,' said she, 'did you notice his eye?'

'Not particlular, sister.'

'There now; the boy is blind. Why, 'twas like a jewel. Such an eye I never saw in a man's head, nor a woman's neither.'

Staines told his wife about Phoebe, and her brother, and spoke of her with a certain admiration that raised Rosa's curiosity, and even that sort of vague jealousy that fires at bare praise. 'I should like to see this phenomenon,' said she. 'You shall,' said he. 'I have to call on Mrs. Manly. She lives near. I will drop you at the little shop; and come back for you.'

He did so, and that gave Rosa a quarter of an hour to make her purchases. When he came back he found her conversing with Phoebe, as if they were old friends, and Dick glaring at his wife with awe and admiration. He could hardly get her away.

She was far more extravagant in her praises than Dr. Staines had been. 'What a good creature,' said she. 'And how clever! To think of her setting up a shop like that all by herself; for her Dick is only seventeen.'

Dr. Staines recommended the little shop wherever he went, and even extended its operations. He asked Phoebe to get her own wheat ground at home, and send the

flour up in bushel bags. 'These assassins, the bakers,' said he, 'are putting copper into the flour now, as well as alum. Pure flour is worth a fancy price to any family. With that we can make the bread of life. What you buy in the shops is the bread of death.'

Dick was a good, sharp boy, devoted to his sister. He stuck to the shop in London, and handed the money to Phoebe, when she came for it. She worked for it in Essex, and extended her country connection for supply as the retail business increased.

Staines wrote an article on pure food, and incidentally mentioned the shop as a place where flour, milk, and butter were to be had pure. This article was published in the 'Lancet,' and caused quite a run upon the little shop. By-and-by Phoebe enlarged it, for which there were great capabilities, and made herself a pretty little parlour, and there she and Dick sat to Falcon for their portraits; here, too, she hung his rejected landscapes. They were fair in her eyes; what matter whether they were like nature? his hand had painted them. She knew, from him, that everybody else had rejected them. With all the more pride and love did she have them framed in gold, and hung up with the portraits in her little sanctum.

For a few months Phoebe Dale was as happy as she deserved to be. Her lover was working, and faithful to her—at least she saw no reason to doubt it. He came to see her every evening, and seemed devoted to her; would sit quietly with her, or walk with her, or take her to a play, or a music-hall—at her expense.

She now lived in a quiet elysium, with a bright and rapturous dream of the future; for she saw she had hit on a good vein of business,

and should soon be independent, and able to indulge herself with a husband, and ask no man's leave.

She sent to Essex for a dairymaid, and set her to churn milk into butter, *coram populo*, at a certain hour every morning. This made a new sensation. At other times the woman was employed to deliver milk and cream to a few favoured customers.

Mrs. Staines dropped in now and then, and chatted with her. Her sweet face, and her *naïveté* won Phoebe's heart; and one day, as happiness is apt to be communicative, she let out to her, in reply to a feeler or two as to whether she was quite alone, that she was engaged to be married to a gentleman; 'But he is not rich, ma'am,' said Phoebe, plaintively; 'he has had trouble: obliged to work for his living, like me; he painted these pictures, *every one of them*. If it was not making too free, and you could spare a guinea—he charges no more for the picture, only you must go to the expense of the frame.'

'Of course I will,' said Rosa, warmly. 'I'll sit for it here, any day you like.'

Now, Rosa said this, out of her ever ready kindness, not to wound Phoebe; but, having made the promise, she kept clear of the place for some days, hoping Phoebe would forget all about it. Meantime she sent her husband to buy.

In about a fortnight she called again, primed with evasions if she should be asked to sit; but nothing of the kind was proposed. Phoebe was dealing, when she went in. The customers disposed of, she said to Mrs. Staines, 'Oh, ma'am, I am glad you are come. I have something I should like to show you.' She took her into the parlour, and made her sit down: then she opened a drawer, and

took out a very small substance that looked like a tear of ground glass, and put it on the table before her. 'There, ma'am,' said she, 'that is all he has had for painting a friend's picture.'

'Oh! what a shame.'

'His friend was going abroad—to Natal; to his uncle that farms out there, and does very well; it is a first-rate part, if you take out a little stock with you, and some money; so my one gave him credit, and when the letter came with that postmark, he counted on a five-pound note: but the letter only said he had got no money yet, but sent him something as a keepsake: and there was this little stone. Poor fellow! he flung it down in a passion; he was so disappointed.'

Phoebe's great grey eyes filled; and Rosa gave a little coo of sympathy that was very womanly and loveable.

Phoebe leaned her cheek on her hand, and said, thoughtfully, 'I picked it up, and brought it away; for, after all—don't you think, ma'am, it is very strange that a friend should send it all that way, if it was worth nothing at all?'

'It is impossible. He could not be so heartless.'

'And do you know, ma'am, when I take it up in my fingers, it doesn't feel like a thing that was worth nothing.'

'No more it does: it makes my fingers tremble. May I take it home, and show it my husband? he is a great physician and knows everything.'

'I am sure I should be much obliged to you, ma'am.'

Rosa drove home, on purpose to show it to Christopher. She ran into his study. 'Oh, Christopher, please look at that. You know that good creature we have our flour and milk and things of. She is engaged, and he is a painter.'

Oh such daubs! He painted a friend, and the friend sent that home all the way from Natal, and he dashed it down, and *she* picked it up, and what is it? ground glass, or a pebble, or what?"

"Humph!—by its shape, and the great—brilliancy—and refraction of light, on this angle, where the stone has got polished by rubbing against other stones, in the course of ages, I'm inclined to think it is—a diamond."

"A diamond!" shrieked Rosa. "No wonder my fingers trembled. Oh, can it be? Oh you good, cold-blooded Christie!—Poor things!—Come along Diamond! Oh you beauty! Oh you duck!"

"Don't be in such a hurry. I only said I thought it was a diamond. Let me weigh it against water, and then I shall *know*."

He took it to his little laboratory, and returned in a few minutes, and said, "Yes. It is just three times and a half heavier than water. It is a diamond."

"Are you positive?"

"I'll stake my existence."

"What is it worth?"

"My dear, I'm not a jeweller: but it is very large and pear-shaped, and I see no flaw: I don't think you could buy it for less than three hundred pounds."

"Three hundred pounds! It is worth 300*l*."

"Or sell it for more than 150*l*."

"A hundred and fifty! It is worth 150*l*."

"Why, my dear, one would think you had invented "the diamond." Show me how to crystallize carbon, and I will share your enthusiasm."

"Oh, I leave you to carbonize crystal. I prefer to gladden hearts: and I will do it this minute, with my diamond."

"Do, dear; and I will take that opportunity to finish my second article on Adulteration."

Rosa drove off to Phoebe Dale.

Now Phoebe was drinking tea with Reginald Falcon, in her little parlour. "Who is that, I wonder?" said she, when the carriage drew up.

Reginald drew back a corner of the gauze curtain which had been drawn across the little glass door leading from the shop.

"It is a lady, and a beautiful—Oh! let me get out." And he rushed out at the door leading to the kitchen, not to be recognized.

This set Phoebe all in a flutter, and the next moment Mrs. Staines tapped at the little door, then opened it, and peeped. "Good news! may I come in?"

"Surely," said Phoebe, still troubled and confused by Reginald's strange agitation.

"There! It is a diamond!" screamed Rosa. "My husband knew it directly. He knows everything. If ever you are ill, go to him and nobody else—by the refraction, and the angle, and its being three times and a half as heavy as water. It is worth 300*l*. to buy, and 150*l*. to sell."

"Oh!"

"So don't you go throwing it away, as he did. (In a whisper) Two teacups! Was that him? I have driven him away. I am so sorry. I'll go; and then you can tell him. Poor fel-low!"

"Oh, ma'am, don't go yet," said Phoebe, trembling. "I haven't half thanked you."

"Oh, bother thanks. Kiss me; that is the way."

"May I?"

"You may, and must. There—and there—and there. Oh dear, what nice things good luck and happiness are, and how sweet to bring them for once."

Upon this, Phoebe and she had a nice little cry together, and Mrs. Staines went off refreshed thereby, and as gay as a lark, pointing

sily at the door, and making faces to Phoebe that she knew he was there, and she only retired, out of her admirable discretion, that they might enjoy the diamond together.

When she was gone, Reginald, whose eye and ear had been at the keyhole, alternately gloating on the face and drinking the accents of the only woman he had ever really loved, came out, looking pale, and strangely disturbed; and sat down at the table, without a word.

Phoebe came back to him, full of the diamond. 'Did you hear what she said, my dear? It is a diamond; it is worth 150*l*. at least. Why, what ails you? Ah! to be sure! you know that lady.'

'I have cause to know her. Cursed jilt!'

'You seem a good deal put out at the sight of her.'

'It took me by surprise, that is all.'

'It takes me by surprise too. I thought you were cured. I thought *my* turn had come at last.'

Reginald met this in sullen silence. Then Phoebe was sorry she had said it; for, after all, it wasn't the man's fault if an old sweetheart had run into the room, and given him a start. So she made him some fresh tea, and pressed him kindly to try her home-made bread and butter.

My lord relaxed his frown and consented, and, of course, they talked diamond.

He told her, loftily, he must take a studio, and his sitters must come to him, and must no longer expect to be immortalized for 1*l*. It must be 2*l*. for a bust, and 3*l*. for a kitcat.

'Nay but, my dear,' said Phoebe, 'they will pay no more because you have a diamond.'

'Then they will have to go unpainted,' said Mr. Falcon.

This was intended for a threat. Phoebe instinctively felt that it might not be so received; she counselled moderation. 'It is a great thing to have earned a diamond,' said she: 'but 'tis only once in a life. Now, be ruled by me: go on just as you are. Sell the diamond, and give me the money to keep for you. Why, you might add a little to it, and so would I, till we made it up 200*l*. And if you could only show 200*l*. you had made and laid by, father would let us marry, and I might keep this shop—it pays well, I can tell you—and keep my gentleman in a sly corner; you need never be seen in it.'

'Ay, ay,' said he, 'that is the small game. But I am a man that have always preferred the big game. I shall set up my studio, and make enough to keep us both. So give me the stone, if you please. I shall take it round to them all, and the rogues won't get it out of me for a hundred and fifty; why, it is as big as a nut.'

'No, no, Reginald. Money has always made mischief between you and me. You never had fifty pounds yet, you didn't fall into temptation. Do pray let me keep it for you; or else sell it—I know how to sell; nobody better—and keep the money for a good occasion.'

'Is it yours, or mine?' said he, sulkily.

'Why yours, dear; you earned it.'

'Then give it me, please.' And he almost forced it out of her hand.

So now she sat down and cried over this piece of good luck, for her heart filled with forebodings.

He laughed at her. But, at last, had the grace to console her, and assure her she was tormenting herself for nothing.

'Time will show,' said she, sadly.

Time did show.

Three or four days he came, as usual, to laugh her out of her forebodings. But presently his visits ceased. She knew what that meant: he was living like a gentleman, melting his diamond, and playing her false with the first pretty face he met.

This blow, coming after she had been so happy, struck Phoebe Dale stupid with grief. The line on her high forehead deepened; and at night she sat with her hands before her, sighing, and sighing, and listening for the footsteps that never came.

'Oh, Dick!' she said, 'never you love any one. I am weary of my life. And to think that, but for that diamond—oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!'

Then Dick used to try and comfort her in his way, and often put his arm round her neck, and gave her his rough but honest sympathy. Dick's rare affection was her one drop of comfort; it was something to relieve her swelling heart.

'Oh, Dick!' she said to him one night, 'I wish I had married him.'

'What, to be ill-used?'

'He couldn't use me worse. I have been wife, and mother, and sweetheart, and all, to him; and to be left like this. He treats me like the dirt beneath his feet.'

'Tis your own fault, Phoebe, partly. You say the word, and I'll break every bone in his carcase.'

'What, do him a mischief! Why, I'd rather die than harm a hair of his head. You must never lift a hand to him, or I shall hate you.'

'Hate me, Phoebe?'

'Ay, boy: I should. God forgive me: 'tis no use deceiving ourselves; when a woman loves a man she despises, never you

come between them; there's no reason in her love, so it is incurable. One comfort, it can't go on for ever; it must kill me, before my time; and so best. If I was only a mother, and had a little Reginald to dandle on my knee and gloat upon, till he spent his money, and came back to me. That's why I said I wished I was his wife. Oh! why does God fill a poor woman's bosom with love, and nothing to spend it on but a stone; for sure his heart must be one. If I had only something that would let me always love it, a little toddling thing at my knee, that would always let me look at it, and love it, something too young to be false to me, too weak to run away from my long—ing—arms—and—year—ning heart!' Then came a burst of agony, and moans of desolation, till poor Dick blubbered loudly at her grief; and then her tears flowed in streams.

Trouble on trouble. Dick himself got strangely out of sorts, and complained of shivers. Phoebe sent him to bed early, and made him some white wine whey very hot. In the morning he got up, and said he was better; but after breakfast he was violently sick, and suffered several returns of nausea before noon. 'One would think I was poisoned,' said he.

At one o'clock he was seized with a kind of spasm in the throat that lasted so long it nearly choked him.

Then Phoebe got frightened, and sent to the nearest surgeon. He did not hurry, and poor Dick had another frightful spasm just as he came in.

'It is hysterical,' said the surgeon. 'No disease of the heart; is there? Give him a little sal-volatile every half-hour.'

In spite of the sal-volatile these terrible spasms seized him every half-hour; and now he used to spring off the bed with a cry of terror when they came; and each one left him weaker and weaker; he had to be carried back by the women.

A sad, sickening fear seized on Phoebe. She left Dick with the maid, and, tying on her bonnet in a moment, rushed wildly down the street, asking the neighbours for a great doctor, the best that could be had for money. One sent her east a mile, another west; and she was almost distracted, when who should drive up but Doctor and Mrs. Staines, to make purchases. She did not know his name, but she knew he was a doctor. She ran to the window, and cried, 'Oh, doctor, my brother! Oh, pray come to him. Oh! oh!'

Doctor Staines got quickly, but calmly out; told his wife to wait; and followed Phoebe upstairs. She told him, in a few agitated words, how Dick had been taken, and all the symptoms; especially what had alarmed her so, his springing off the bed when the spasm came.

Doctor Staines told her to hold the patient up. He lost not a moment, but opened his mouth resolutely, and looked down.

'The glottis is swollen,' said he: then he felt his hands, and said, with the grave, terrible calm of experience, 'He is dying.'

'Oh, no! no! Oh, doctor, save him! save him!'

'Nothing can save him, unless we had a surgeon on the spot. Yes, I might save him, if you have the courage: opening his windpipe before the next spasm is his one chance.'

'Open his windpipe! Oh, doctor! It will kill him. Let me look at you.'

She looked hard in his face. It gave her confidence.

'Is it the only chance?'

'The only one: and it is flying while we chatter.'

'Do it.'

He whipped out his lancet.

'But I can't look on it. I trust to you and my Saviour's mercy.'

She fell on her knees, and bowed her head in prayer.

Staines seized a basin, put it by the bedside, made an incision in the windpipe, and got Dick down on his stomach, with his face over the bedside. Some blood ran, but not much. 'Now!' he cried, cheerfully, 'a small bellows! There's one in your parlour. Run.'

Phoebe ran for it, and, at Dr. Staines' direction, lifted Dick a little, while the bellows, duly cleansed, were gently applied to the aperture in the windpipe, and the action of the lungs delicately aided by this primitive but effectual means.

He showed Phoebe how to do it, tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, wrote a hasty direction to an able surgeon near, and sent his wife off with it in the carriage.

Phoebe and he never left the patient till the surgeon came with all the instruments required; amongst the rest, with a big, tortuous pair of nippers, with which he could reach the glottis, and snip it. But they consulted, and thought it wiser to continue the surer method; and so a little tube was neatly inserted into Dick's windpipe, and his throat bandaged; and by this aperture he did his breathing for some little time.

Phoebe nursed him like a mother; and the terror and the joy did her good, and made her less desolate.

Dick was only just well when both of them were summoned to the farm, and arrived only just in time to receive their father's blessing and his last sigh.

Their elder brother, a married man, inherited the farm, and was executor. Phoebe and Dick were left 1,500*l.* apiece, on condition of their leaving England and going to Natal.

They knew directly what that meant. Phoebe was to be parted from a bad man; and Dick was to comfort her for the loss.

When this part of the will was read to Phoebe she turned faint, and only her health and bodily vigour kept her from swooning right away.

But she yielded. 'It is the will of the dead,' said she; 'and I will obey it; for, oh, if I had but listened to him more when he was alive to advise me, I should not sit here now, sick at heart and dry-eyed, when I ought to be thinking only of the good friend that is gone.'

When she had come to this she became feverishly anxious to be gone. She busied herself in purchasing agricultural machines, and stores, and even stock; and, to see her pinching the beasts' ribs to find their condition, and parrying all attempts to cheat her, you would never have believed she could be a love-sick woman.

Dick kept her up to the mark. He only left her to bargain with the master of a good vessel; for it was no trifle to take out horses, and cows, and machines, and bales of cloth, cotton, and linen.

When that was settled they came in to town together, and Phoebe bought shrewdly, at wholesale houses in the City, for cash, and would have bargains: and the little shop in — Street was turned into a warehouse.

They were all ardour, as colonists should be; and, what pleased Dick most, she never mentioned Falcon; yet he learned from the maid that worthy had been there twice, looking very seedy.

The day drew near. Dick was in high spirits.

'We shall soon make our fortune out there,' he said: 'and I'll get you a good husband.'

She shuddered, but said nothing.

The evening before they were to sail Phoebe sat alone, in her black dress, tired with work, and asking herself, sick at heart, could she ever really leave England, when the door opened softly, and Reginald Falcon, shabbily dressed, came in, and threw himself into a chair.

She started up, with a scream, then sank down again, trembling, and turned her face to the wall.

'So you are going to run away from me!' said he, savagely.

'Ay, Reginald,' said she, meekly.

'This is your fine love; is it?'

'You have worn it out, dear,' she said, softly, without turning her head.

'I wish I could say as much: but, curse it, every time I leave you I learn to love you more. I am never really happy but when I am with you.'

'Bless you for saying that, dear. I often thought you *must* find that out one day: but you took too long.'

'Oh, better late than never, Phoebe! Can you have the heart to go to the Cape, and leave me all alone in the world, with nobody that really cares for me? Surely you are not obliged to go.'

'Yes; my father left Dick and me 1,500*l.* apiece to go: that was the condition. Poor Dick loves his unhappy sister. He won't go without me—I should be his ruin—poor Dick, that really loves me; and he lay a-dying here, and the good doctor and me—God bless him—we brought him back from the grave. Ah, you little know what I have gone through. You were not here. Catch you being near me when I



am in trouble. There, I must go. I must go. I will go; if I fling myself into the sea half way.'

'And, if you do, I'll take a dose of poison; for I have thrown away the truest heart, the sweetest, most unselfish, kindest, generous—oh! oh! oh!'

And he began to howl.

This set Phoebe sobbing. 'Don't cry, dear,' she murmured, through her tears: 'if you have really any love for me, come with me.'

'What, leave England, and go to a desert?'

'Love can make a desert a garden.'

'Phoebe, I'll do anything else. I'll swear not to leave your side. I'll never look at any other face but yours. But I can't live in Africa.'

'I know you can't. It takes a little real love to go there with a poor girl like me. Ah, well, I'd have made you so happy. We are not poor emigrants. I have a horse for you to ride, and guns to shoot; and me and Dick would do all the work for you. But there are others here you can't leave for me. Well, then, good-bye, dear. In Africa, or here, I shall always love you; and many a salt tear I shall shed for you yet; many a one I have, as well you know. God bless you. Pray for poor Phoebe, that goes against her will to Africa, and leaves her heart with thee.'

This was too much even for the selfish Reginald. He knelt at her knees, and took her hand, and kissed it, and actually shed a tear or two over it.

She could not speak. He had no hope of changing her resolution: and presently he heard Dick's voice outside; so he got up to avoid him. 'I'll come again in the morning, before you go.'

'Oh no! no!' she gasped. 'Unless you want me to die at your feet. I am almost dead now.'

Reginald slipped out by the kitchen.

Dick came in, and found his sister leaning with her head back against the wall. 'Why, Phoebe,' said he, 'whatever is the matter?' and he took her by the shoulder.

She moaned, and he felt her all limp and powerless.

'What is it, lass? Whatever is the matter? Is it about going away?'

She would not speak for a long time.

When she did speak, it was to say something for which my male reader perhaps may hardly be prepared.

'Oh, Dick—forgive me!'

'Why, what for?'

'Forgive me, or else kill me: I don't care which.'

'I do though. There, I forgive you. Now what's your crime?'

'I can't go. Forgive me!'

'Can't go?'

'I can't. Forgive me!'

'I'm blessed if I don't believe that vagabond has been here tormenting of you again.'

'Oh, don't miscall him. He is penitent. Yes, Dick, he has been here crying to me—and I can't leave him. I can't—I can't. Dear Dick! you are young, and stout-hearted; take all the things over, and make your fortune out there; and leave your poor foolish sister behind. I should only fling myself into the salt sea, if I left him now, and that would be peace to me, but a grief to thee.'

'Lordsake, Phoebe, don't talk so. I can't go without you. And do but think. Why the horses are on board by now, and all the gear. It's my belief a good hiding is all you want, to bring you to your senses; but I han't the heart to give you one, worse luck. Blessed if I know what to say or do.'

'I won't go!' cried Phoebe, turning violent all of a sudden. 'No,

not if I am dragged to the ship by the hair of my head. Forgive me! And, with that word, she was a mouse again.

'Eh, but women are kittle cattle to drive,' said poor Dick, ruefully. And down he sat at a non-plus, and very unhappy.

Phoebe sat opposite, sullen, heart-sick, wretched to the core; but determined not to leave Reginald.

Then came an event that might have been foreseen, yet it took them both by surprise.

A light step was heard, and a graceful, though seedy, figure entered the room, with a set speech in his mouth: 'Phoebe, you are right. I owe it to your long and faithful affection to make a sacrifice for you. I will go to Africa with you. I will go to the end of the world, sooner than you shall say I care for any woman on earth but you.'

Both brother and sister were so unprepared for this, that they could hardly realize it at first.

Phoebe turned her great, inquiring eyes on the speaker, and it was a sight to see amazement, doubt, hope, and happiness animating her features, one after another.

'Is this real?' said she.

'I'll sail with you to-morrow, Phoebe; and I will make you a good husband, if you will have me.'

'That is spoke like a man,' said Dick. 'You take him at his word, Phoebe; and if he ill-uses you out there, I'll break every bone in his skin.'

'How dare you threaten him?' said Phoebe. 'You had best leave the room.'

Out went poor Dick, with the tear in his eye at being snubbed so. While he was putting up the shutters, Phoebe was making love to her pseudo penitent. 'My dear,'

said she, 'trust yourself to me. You don't know all my love yet; for I have never been your wife, and I would not be your jade; that is the only thing I ever refused you. Trust yourself to me. Why, you never found happiness with others; try it with me. It shall be the best day's work you ever did, going out in the ship with me. You don't know how happy a loving wife can make her husband. I'll pet you out there as man was never petted. And besides, it isn't for life; Dick and me we will soon make a fortune out there, and then I'll bring you home, and see you spend it any way you like but one. Oh, how I love you! do you love me a little? I worship the ground you walk on. I adore every hair of your head!' Her noble arm went round his neck in a moment, and the grandeur of her passion electrified him so far that he kissed her affectionately, if not quite so warmly as she did him: and so it was all settled. The maid was discharged that night, instead of the morning, and Reginald was to occupy her bed. Phoebe went up-stairs with her heart literally on fire, to prepare his sleeping-room, and so Dick and Reginald had a word.

'I say, Dick, how long will this voyage be?'

'Two months, sir, I'm told.'

'Please to cast your eyes on this suit of mine. Don't you think it is rather seedy—to go to Africa with? Why, I shall disgrace you on board the ship. I say, Dick, lend me three sovs., just to buy a new suit at the slop shop.'

'Well, brother-in-law,' said Dick, 'I don't see any harm in that. I'll go and fetch them for you.'

What does this sensible Dick do but go up-stairs to Phoebe, and say, 'He wants three pounds to buy a suit; am I to lend it him?'

Phoebe was shaking and patting her penitent's pillow. She dropped it on the bed in dismay. 'Oh, Dick, not for all the world! Why, if he had three sovereigns, he'd desert me at the water's edge. Oh, God help me, how I love him! God forgive me, how I mistrust him! Good Dick! kind Dick! say we have suits of clothes, and we'll fit him like a prince, as he ought to be, on board ship: but not a shilling of money: and, my dear, don't put the weight on me. You understand?'

'Ay, mistress, I understand.'

'Good Dick!'

'Oh, all right: and then, don't you snap this here good, kind Dick's nose off at a word again.'

'Never. I get wild if anybody threatens him. Then I'm not myself. Forgive my hasty tongue. You know I love you, dear!'

'Oh ay: you love me well enough. But seems to me your love is precious like cold veal; and your love for that chap is hot roast beef.'

'Ha! ha! ha! ha!'

'Oh, ye can laugh now, can ye?'

'Ha! ha! ha!'

'Well, the more of that music the better for me.'

'Yes, dear: but go and tell him.'

Dick went down, and said, 'I've got no money to spare, till I get to the Cape; but Phoebe has got a box full of suits, and I made her promise to keep it out. She will dress you like a prince, you may be sure.'

'Oh, that is it, is it?' said Reginald, drily.

Dick made no reply.

At nine o'clock they were on board the vessel; at ten she weighed anchor, and a steam-vessel drew her down the river about thirty miles, then cast off, and left her to the south-easterly

breeze. Up went sail after sail; she nodded her lofty head, and glided away for Africa.

Phoebe shed a few natural tears at leaving the shores of Old England; but they soon dried. She was demurely happy, watching her prize, and asking herself had she really secured it, and all in a few hours?

They had a prosperous voyage: were married at Cape Town, and went up the country, bag and baggage, looking out for a good bargain in land. Reginald was mounted on an English horse, and allowed to zig-zag about, and shoot, and play, while his wife and brother-in-law marched slowly with their cavalcade.

What with air, exercise, wholesome food, and smiles of welcome, and delicious petting, this egotist enjoyed himself finely. He admitted as much. Says he, one evening, to his wife, who sat by him for the pleasure of seeing him feed, 'It sounds absurd: but I never was so happy in all my life.'

At that, the celestial expression of her pastoral face, and the maternal gesture with which she drew her pet's head to her queenly bosom, was a picture for celibacy to gnash the teeth at.

#### CHAPTER IX.

During this period, the most remarkable things that happened to Doctor and Mrs. Staines, were really those which I have related as connecting them with Phoebe Dale and her brother; to which I will now add that Dr. Staines detailed Dick's case in a remarkable paper, entitled 'Edema of the Glottis,' and showed how the patient had been brought back from the grave by tracheotomy and artificial respiration. He received a high price for this article.

To tell the truth, he was careful

not to admit that it was he who had opened the windpipe; so the credit of the whole operation was given to Mr. Jenkyn; and this gentleman was naturally pleased, and threw a good many consultation fees in Staines' way.

The Lucases, to his great comfort—for he had an instinctive aversion to Miss Lucas—left London for Paris in August, and did not return all the year.

In February he reviewed his year's work and twelve months' residence in the Bijou. The pecuniary result was—outgoings, 950*l.*: income, from fees, 280*l.*; writing, 90*l.*

He showed these figures to Mrs. Staines, and asked her if she could suggest any diminution of expenditure. Could she do with less housekeeping money?

'Oh, impossible! You cannot think how the servants eat: and they won't touch our home-made bread.'

'The fools! Why?'

'Oh, because they think it costs us less. Servants seem to me always to hate the people whose bread they eat.'

'More likely it is their vanity. Nothing that is not paid for before their eyes seems good enough for them. Well, dear, the bakers will revenge us. But is there any other item we could reduce? Dress?'

'Dress! Why I spend nothing.'

'Forty-five pounds this year.'

'Well, I shall want none next year.'

'Well then, Rosa, as there is nothing we can reduce, I must write more, and take more fees, or we shall be in the wrong box. Only 860*l.* left of our little capital; and, mind, we have not another shilling in the world. One comfort, there is no debt. We pay ready money for everything.'

Rosa coloured a little, but said nothing.

Staines did his part nobly. He read; he wrote; he paced the yard; he wore his old clothes in the house. He took off his new ones, when he came in. He was all genius, drudgery, patience.

How Phoebe Dale would have valued him, co-operated with him, and petted him, if she had had the good luck to be his wife!

The season came back, and with it Miss Lucas, towing a brilliant bride, Mrs. Vivian, young, rich, pretty, and gay, with a waist you could span, and athirst for pleasure.

This lady was the first that ever made Rosa downright jealous. She seemed to have everything the female heart could desire; and she was No. 1 with Miss Lucas this year. Now Rosa was No. 1, last season, and had weakly imagined that was to last for ever. But Miss Lucas had always a sort of female flame, and it never lasted two seasons.

Rosa did not care so very much for Miss Lucas before, except as a convenient friend; but now she was mortified to tears at finding Miss Lucas made more fuss with another than with her.

This foolish feeling spurred her to attempt a rivalry with Mrs. Vivian, in the very things where rivalry was hopeless.

Miss Lucas gave both ladies tickets for a flower-show, where all the great folk were to be, princes and princesses, etc.

'But I have nothing to wear,' sighed Rosa.

'Then you must get something, and mind it is not pink, please; for we must not clash in colour. You know I'm dark, and pink becomes me. (The selfish young brute was not half as dark as Rosa.) Mine is coming from Worth's, in Paris, on purpose.

And this new Madam Cie, of Regent Street, has such a duck of a bonnet, just come from Paris. She wanted to make me one from it; but I told her I would have none but the pattern bonnet—and she knows very well she can't pass a copy off on me. Let me drive you up there; and you can see mine, and order one if you like it.'

'Oh, thank you; let me just run and speak to my husband first.'

Staines was writing for the bare life, and a number of German books about him, slaving to make a few pounds, when in comes the buoyant figure and beaming face his soul delighted in.

He laid down his work, to enjoy the sunbeam of love.

'Oh, darling, I've only come in for a minute. We are going to a flower-show on the 13th; everybody will be so beautifully dressed—especially that Mrs. Vivian. I have got ten yards of beautiful blue silk in my wardrobe, but that is not enough to make a whole dress. Everything takes so much stuff now. Madame Cie does not care to make up dresses unless she finds the silk, but Miss Lucas says she thinks, to oblige a friend of hers, she would do it for once in a way. You know, dear, it would only take a few yards more, and it would last as a dinner-dress for ever so long.'

Then she clasped him round the neck, and leaned her head upon his shoulder, and looked lovingly up in his face. 'I know you would like your Rosa to look as well as Mrs. Vivian.'

'No one ever looks as well—in my eyes—as my Rosa. There, the dress will add nothing to your beauty; but go and get it, to please yourself: it is very considerate of you to have chosen something of which you have ten yards already.

See, dear, I'm to receive twenty pounds for this article; if research was paid, it ought to be a hundred. I shall add it all to your allowance for dresses this year. So no debt, mind; but come to me for everything.'

The two ladies drove off to Madame Cie's, a pretty shop lined with dark velvet and lace draperies.

In the back room they were packing a lovely bridal dress, going off, the following Saturday, to New York.

'What, send from America to London?'

'Oh dear yes!' exclaimed Madame Cie. 'The American ladies are excellent customers. They buy everything of the best, and the most expensive.'

'I have brought a new customer,' said Miss Lucas, 'and I want you to do a great favour, and that is to match a blue silk, and make her a pretty dress for the flower-show on the 13th.'

Madame Cie produced a white muslin polonaise, which she was just going to send home to the Princess —, to be worn over mauve.

'Oh, how pretty and simple!' exclaimed Miss Lucas.

'I have some lace exactly like that,' said Mrs. Staines.

'Then, why don't you have a polonaise? The lace is the only expensive part, the muslin is a mere nothing; and it is such a useful dress, it can be worn over any silk.'

It was agreed Madame Cie was to send for the blue silk and the lace, and the dresses were to be tried on on Thursday.

On Thursday, as Rosa went gaily into Madame Cie's back room to have the dresses tried on, Madame Cie said, 'You have a beautiful lace shawl, but it wants arranging—in five minutes I could

astonish you with what I could do to that shawl.'

'Oh, pray do,' said Mrs. Staines.

The dressmaker kept her word. By the time the blue dress was tried on, Madame Cie had, with the aid of a few pins, plaits, and a bow of blue ribbon, transformed the half-lace shawl into one of the smartest and most *distingué* things imaginable; but when the bill came in at Christmas, for that five minutes' labour and *distingué* touch, she charged one pound eight.

Madame Cie then told the ladies, in an artfully confidential tone, she had a quantity of black silk coming home, which she had purchased considerably below cost price; and that she should like to make them each a dress—not for her own sake, but theirs—as she knew they would never meet such a bargain again. 'You know, Miss Lucas,' she continued, 'we don't want our money, when we know our customers. Christmas is soon enough for us.'

'Christmas is a long time off,' thought the young wife, 'nearly ten months. I think I'll have a black silk, Madame Cie; but I must not say anything to the Doctor about it just yet, or he might think me extravagant.'

'No one can ever think a lady extravagant for buying a black silk; it's such a useful dress; lasts for ever—almost.'

Days, weeks, and months rolled on, and with them an ever-rolling tide of flower-shows, dinners, at-homes, balls, operas, lawn-parties, concerts, and theatres.

Strange that in one house there should be two people who loved each other, yet their lives ran so far apart, except while they were asleep: the man all industry, self-denial, patience; the woman all frivolity, self-indulgence, and

amusement; both chained to an oar, only one in a working boat, the other in a painted galley.

The woman got tired first, and her charming colour waned sadly. She came to him for medicine to set her up. 'I feel so languid.'

'No, no,' said he; 'no medicine can do the work of wholesome food, and rational repose. You lack the season of all natures, sleep. Dine at home three days running, and go to bed at ten.'

On this the Doctor's wife went to a chemist for advice. He gave her a pink stimulant; and, as stimulants have two effects, viz., first, to stimulate, and then to weaken, this did her no lasting good. Doctor Staines cursed the London season, and threatened to migrate to Liverpool.

But there was worse behind.

Returning one day to his dressing-room, just after Rosa had come down stairs, he caught sight of a red stain in a washhand-basin. He examined it; it was arterial blood.

He went to her directly, and expressed his anxiety.

'Oh, it is nothing,' said she.

'Nothing! Pray how often has it occurred?'

'Once or twice. I must take your advice, and be quiet, that is all.'

Staines examined the housemaid; she lied instinctively at first, seeing he was alarmed; but, being urged to tell the truth, said she had seen it repeatedly, and had told the cook.

He went down stairs again, and sat down, looking wretched.

'Oh dear!' said Rosa. 'What is the matter now?'

'Rosa,' said he, very gravely, 'there are two people a woman is mad to deceive—her husband and her physician. You have deceived both.'

(To be continued.)

## 'GARETH AND LYNETTE.'

IN forming an estimate of any work, it is necessary to consider that at which it aims. It is as wrong to criticise what is only intended to be mediocre, on the assumption that it aims at excellence, as it is to compare that which is intended to be first-class with any other than a first-class standard. In judging of a prime minister, it is no palliation of his shortcomings to say that he would have made a good under-secretary. Similarly, in determining the merit of a literary work, we cannot forget the degree of excellence which is claimed for it.

Mr. Tennyson's admirers have always claimed for him a place in the first rank of English poets. He has been compared by them with the greatest of past generations, and the comparison has been declared not unfavourable to him. He has always seemed to aim at a very high ideal. In an age when the income obtainable by literature is greater than it ever has been, Mr. Tennyson has shown not the slightest inclination to yield to the temptation to prefer a lucrative to an admirable career. He has only to put his pen to paper to make a considerable sum. He can get more for a short lyric than was given for 'Paradise Lost,' yet he can never be accused of writing too much. His works are produced slowly, and at intervals. Far from pouring forth volume after volume with a lavishment which would undoubtedly result in the realisation of large wealth, not necessarily at the expense of fame, he has been almost stingy of his sweetness, and has seemed to aim at elaborate perfection, rather than at easy and abounding brilliance.

Whether or not posterity will accord to him the high place which his admirers now claim for him is a question into which I do not wish to enter. It suffices that the fact of their claim makes it necessary to judge whatever he produces by an exceedingly high standard. His poems ought to be not only free from positive faults, but of exalted artistic merit. In all, therefore, that I may say in this paper as to his last work, I would wish it borne in mind that I am comparing it with a very lofty ideal. And if I am forced to ascribe to it a deterioration, as compared with what Mr. Tennyson has already produced, or what he is considered able to produce, I do not for a moment wish to deny that it has, very undoubtedly, great excellence.

From a preface to the 'Holy Grail' we learn that 'The Passing of Arthur,' called in the earlier edition 'Mort d'Arthur' (a title manifestly inferior to that chosen later), was connected with the rest, in accordance with an early project of the author's. We have a glimpse of this project in the original introduction to 'Mort d'Arthur.'

"You know," said Frank, "he burnt His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books."

And later:

"These twelve books of mine Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth, Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I," Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth."

From this it would seem as if Mr. Tennyson contemplated, from the first, the possibility, at least, of an epic in twelve books on the



Arthurian legends. This idea has been gradually carried out, and at present we have ten consecutive books, 'The Coming of Arthur,' 'Gareth and Lynette,' 'Geraint and Enid,' 'Merlin and Vivien,' 'Lancelot and Elaine,' 'The Holy Grail,' 'Pelleas and Etarre,' 'The Last Tournament,' 'Guinevere,' and 'The Passing of Arthur.' The latter has been described as the eleventh book, from which we might infer that a twelfth is to be added, and a complementary book inserted among the earlier poems of the series. Whether this plan will be effected or not must be a mere conjecture; as must the subject of the final poem, though we have a hint of a possible subject in the concluding verses of 'Elaine,' where

'So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful  
pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man.'

And 'Guinevere' and 'The Passing of Arthur' suggest others; but, even if the whole work were left as it now is, it would by no means lack completeness.

As compared with the earlier books of the epic, both 'Gareth and Lynette' and 'The Last Tournament' are much wanting in artistic grace. In the latter, not only has the high purity which is the motive of the poem failed, not only has the sin of Guinevere brought pollution in Arthur's court—so that

'All courtesy is dead.  
The glory of our Round Table is no  
more';

but the purity and sweetness of the manner in which the story is told has given way to coarseness, which, however characteristic of the subject matter, is not artistic. Take the following passage in 'The Last Tournament':

'But on the 'hither side of that lewd  
morn,  
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage  
ribbed  
From ear to ear with dog-whip weals,  
his nose  
Bridge-broken, one eye out and one  
hand off,  
And one with shattered fingers dangling  
lame,  
A churl, to whom indignantly the king:  
"My churl, for whom Christ died, what  
evil beast  
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy  
face? or fiend?  
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image  
in thee thus?"  
Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
splintered teeth  
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
blunt stump,  
Pitch-blackened, sawing the air, said  
the maim'd churl, . . . .'

Or this:

"The teeth of hell flay bare and gnash  
thee flat!  
Lo, art thou not that eunuch-hearted  
king  
Who fain had clipt free manhood from  
the world—  
The woman-worshipper? Yea, gods  
curse and I!  
Slain was the brother of my paramour  
By a knight of thine, and I that heard  
her whine  
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
Swore by the scorpion-worm that twists  
in hell  
And stings itself to everlasting death,  
To hang whatever knight of thine I  
fought  
And tumbled."

Is there not a grossness of language and imagery (in the last passage almost revolting) which cannot be excused on the ground that it is emblematic of the grossness of the age which it describes? It is, of course, true that evil should be made abhorrent, but this effect should not be produced by the heaping together of epithets, similes, and descriptions better adapted to a modern Billingsgate than the court of Arthur. The scene, too, in 'The Last Tournament' between Tristrem and Isolt is repulsive. It may, indeed, be fairly argued

that guilty love should never be made attractive, but to mix up the insolence and coarseness of Tristrem with any feeling even called love is an error. To read 'The Last Tournament' after 'The Passing of Arthur,' 'Elaine,' or 'Guinevere,' makes one ask how Gainsborough would have succeeded if he had adopted the style of Hogarth. So, also, in 'Gareth and Lynette,' the petulance of Lynette takes such perpetual refuge in allusions to carrion and foulness that one is inclined to follow her example, and

'Nip one's nose

With petulant finger, shrilling, "Hence Avoid, thou smelliest all of kitchen-grease."

There is an entire absence of the wondrous beauty of word and measure which graces 'The Passing of Arthur' and 'Guinevere.' An unrefined and eminently unpoetical materialism has taken the place of the pure idealism of the earlier books. It may, indeed, be contended that this is intentional. If it be so, I am inclined to think that a poem which displays such incongruities, and which lays so much stress on the bad side of the scenes and characters which it describes, can never bear the high reputation which Mr. Tennyson's admirers have claimed for his treatment of the Arthurian legend.

'Gareth and Lynette,' the last published of all the books before us, deals with an early period of the history of the Table Round. But it is impossible to help thinking that the critic of after times will need no external evidence to satisfy him that it was one of the last written. Glimpses we have, here and there, of Mr. Tennyson's wondrous power, and tastes of his exquisite sweetness; but the powerful is marred by the weak, and the sweet by the bitter. The matter of the poem is less attractive

than that of its predecessors, and the manner in which it is laid before us is even more open to objection. And first of the matter.

It is a common fault in criticism to assign to an author much that he never intended to convey. But, in saying that Tennyson's poems, and especially his Arthurian epic, are allegorical, I do not think that a critic is open to be accused of this fault. In narrating certain mythical actions, Mr. Tennyson appears to aim at representing more than the mere course of knightly prowess. If this be a true judgment, and if the work is not to have a conclusion, which is yet wanting, I am more than ever inclined to lament the utter collapse of the Table Round. It seemed, from the earlier books, that, even if the optimist views of Arthur's court, to which one would cling most gladly, could not be maintained, they would at least not yield to pessimism. But the breakdown of all that is good is so thorough, as we see the end as yet, that one regrets that so fair an edifice was built only to be torn into so ghastly a ruin. I repeat that I am only judging of what is before us. Guinevere's repentance is an accomplished fact. That of Lancelot is, as we have seen, hinted at. And it may be that at Avilion may be gathered together after the apotheosis, if I may call it so, of Arthur, a transcendental table round of those who have conquered all their enemies, even death. But the salient point of the poem, as we have it, is the utter failure of virtue to oust vice, and the complete triumph of evil over good.

'Gareth and Lynette' is, if any of the books are, allegorical. It occupies, as we have seen, an early place in the legend, and as yet the defeat of virtue is not matured, indeed is scarcely begun. Gareth,

a royal youth, with high ambition  
of eager boyhood,

'Discaged to sweep  
In ever-highering eagle-circles up  
To the great sun of glory, and thence  
swoop  
Down upon all things base, and dash  
them dead,'

is restrained at home by his mother's love, and at last is only allowed to have his wish of going to Arthur's court disguised as a scullion, whence he submits obediently and without murmur to the harassing supervision of the gross 'Sir Kay, the seneschal.' In man's effort after good, the earliest difficulty to which he is subjected is that of being misunderstood. His motives and his character are suspected, and himself treated with contumely and scorn, till, but that his purpose is firm, he would fain turn back from his onward course. After a period of service far shorter than that which he undertook, the mother of Gareth relents; Gareth's identity is made known to the king; and ere long, still in the character of the scullion, he is sent on a knightly quest. If man's motives are true they are sure, sooner or later, to become known and appreciated by those whose judgment is of most value; though even then they may be misinterpreted by others. Sir Gareth—he is secretly knighted by the King—is assigned the duty of following a maiden whose sister is imprisoned in a castle by four knights, of which

'Three knights  
Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
fourth,  
And of that four the mightiest, holds  
her stay'd  
In her own castle, and so besieges her  
To break her will and make her wed  
with him.

Three of these,  
Proud in their fantasy, call themselves  
the Day,  
Morning-star, and Noon-sun, and Evening-  
star,

Being strong fools; and never a whit  
more wise,  
The fourth, who alway rideth armed in  
black,  
He names himself the Night, and oftener  
Death,  
And wears a helmet mounted with a  
skull,  
And has a skeleton figured on his arms,  
To show that who may alay or 'scape  
the three,  
Slain by himself shall enter endless  
night.'

These, as we are afterwards told, typify the 'war of time against the soul of man.' Sir Gareth overcomes the three, one after another, having the most desperate battle with the Star of Even, during which

'He seemed as one  
That all in later sadder age begins  
To war against ill-uses of a life.  
But these from all his life arise and  
cry,  
Thou hast made us lords and canst not  
put us down.'

The aspect of the fourth is terrible; his monstrous appearance, the dread silence he maintains, the mysterious incomprehensibility which surrounds him, all 'set the horror higher,' and are aptly allegorical of death. The scene at this point is worked up with great dramatic power, and there the sublime runs no risk whatever of being merged into the ridiculous. The awe-inspiring appearance of the monster is such 'That ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt  
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him\*  
were aghast.'

Undauntedly, however, Sir Gareth does him battle, and, splitting first his crest and then his helm, sees

'Out from this  
Issue the bright face of a blooming  
boy.'

\* Mr. Tennyson's accuracy of grammar in this poem has been attacked, and in this passage the word 'him' is open to serious objection, as referring by position to Sir Lancelot or Sir Gareth, by intention to the black knight.

At first sight, this conception is very pleasing. Death, if braved and encountered, is not a terrible, awful foe, but is graceful, pleasing, and gentle. This is very taking. But, on closer examination, it is different from and less logical than the general representation of death. In the usual language of metaphor, death is the conqueror — albeit that his victory is turned into peace. 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' Death is irresistible, overthrowing all alike. His grasp is inevitable, his power relentless, and not to be evaded. That death should be overcome, and appear as a child, appears to involve a confusion of metaphor. It is, indeed, true that death is but a renewal of life, and that the child is father of the man, but to represent death as a pseudo-warrior who is easily overthrown, and becomes a timorous boy pleading for mercy for his weakness, is a bold, but, I venture to think, untenable conception.

Briefly, then, this is the allegory. The doer of good, misinterpreted, scorned, and reviled, overcomes the opposition of the morning, noon, and eventide of his life, nor then is free, but is met by, and has to encounter, death, whom, conquering, he discovers to be, not a monster, but a fair friend. Is this a great conception? Fair and pure it undoubtedly is, and as such in contrast perhaps with the underlying framework of one or two of the Arthurian idylls — notably, as we have seen, of 'The Last Tournament.' But is it such that the future readers of the poetry of this generation will look upon 'Gareth and Lynette' as embodying a high or large idea?

'Vex not then the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit;  
Vex not then the poet's mind;  
For thou canst not fathom it.'

I know and respect the advice; but there is nothing easier than to lay claim to profoundness, nothing more difficult than to be profound. Moreover—

'Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.'

All the best poems are remarkable for this, that, though a deep vein of allegorical meaning underlies them, the value of that which appears is never made to give place to the allegory. The beauty of the ideas, philosophical or otherwise, in Shakespeare and Milton, is never sacrificed to the necessities of allegorical teaching. Each passage is perfect in itself, even though it has a direct bearing on the allegory. This is not the case in 'Gareth and Lynette.' Though the conception is not a very high one, yet, if we take away the allegory, the poem loses more than half its value. There is a great lack of passages beautiful in themselves, independently of their bearing on the poem. There is nothing which sends the blood thrilling through the veins with the exquisite pleasure produced by the speech to the fallen Queen in 'Guinevere,' the lake scene in 'The Passing of Arthur,' or the death of Elaine. I will not say the book is commonplace, because Mr. Tennyson's genius is sufficient to save it from that, and here and there we have flashes of it; but it is not the thing of beauty which it might perhaps have been made.

The play of the book centres in the two characters from which it takes its name. Bellicent, Lancelot, and the King appear for a brief space on the stage, but have little importance. The chivalry of Lancelot is not yet marred by the foul ingratitude which disgraces him in the more advanced portions of the series. Bellicent

is simply a fond, foolish mother, of whom, happily, we see little. The King is a vague, almost shadowy, administrator of justice, whose action in this volume barely affects our general conception of his character as given by Mr. Tennyson. The three knights are set up under such circumstances that we know they will inevitably be knocked down. And Sir Kay is an unreal foil to Gareth's refinement.

Of the two chief actors, Gareth commands our admiration up to a certain point. He has the attributes, common to all Mr. Tennyson's knights, of obedience, courtesy, and strength, but of neither in any very great degree. The first is tried by his submission to his mother's rule, and his labours under Sir Kay, the seneschal. But it must be observed that to his mother Gareth yields an obedience which is most unwilling, and his desire for deeds of high emprise is marked by a selfish disregard of her love which scarcely belongs to a high character; while to Sir Kay he only is obedient for a chief portion of the stipulated time, and he tosses away his bonds with contumely and scorn, with a haste which marks him to be not one of Arthur's noblest, for we are told in 'Guinevere'

"That none of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn."

His courtesy is displayed in the unmoved manner in which he listens to Lynette's extraordinary abuse; but when he says

"Good sooth! I hold  
He scarce is knight, yea but half man,  
nor meet  
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish  
heat  
At any gentle damsel's waywardness!"

he expresses a disregard for all that a woman may say, of which

the courtesy is at least open to question.

His courage is undoubted, and his strength—even for his enormous height—is apparently great, but he owes his victory over the second knight, or Noonday Sun, to the accident of a horse slipping, and not to any prowess of his own. There is, however, something very admirable in the good-humour with which he refuses to be terrified by the mysterious fourth knight.

"Wonders ye have done,  
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow  
In having slung the three; I see thee  
maim'd,  
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling  
the fourth."  
"And wherefore, damsel? Tell me all  
ye know,  
Ye cannot scare me; nor rough face, or  
voice,  
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless  
savagery  
Appal me from the quest."

And, again, when

"Lancelot on him urged  
All the devisings of their chivalry,  
Where one might meet a mightier than  
himself,"

he replies:

"Here be rules. I know but one—  
To dash against mine enemy and to  
win."

And his persistence in refusing to be angered by the petulance of Lynette is graceful, until marred by his declaration that he cared not what she said.

In Lynette we have a character which at least has one merit to commend it—that of originality. Even in her appearance—

"A brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
blossom,  
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender  
nose  
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower"—

we have at least an epithet which is quite new. Let those who have hitherto made the upward curve of one of their features a cause for

regret rejoice that they may call their noses 'Tip-tilted like' the petal of a flower.' Mr. Tennyson deserves the thanks of many a love-lorn swain who hitherto has had to fall back on the ungraceful word *retroussé*, if he wanted to describe the feature with which his love has so often expressed her rejection of his suit.

Nor is the character of Lynette less remarkable than her appearance. Angered by what she holds the madness of the King in sending his scullion knave, instead of Lancelot, to aid her in her need, she wrathfully and peevishly reviles him as he rides:

"Thou  
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—  
to me  
Thou smell'est all of kitchen as before."

She calls him

"A villain fitter to stick swine  
Than ride abroad redressing woman's  
wrong,  
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

She harps on the same string over and over again, shouting to him that he is knight-knave and knave-knight, that he knows nought of birds save that

"These be for the snare  
(So runs thy fancy), these be for the  
spit,  
Larding and basting."

And she uses the most ungraceful metaphors to express her abhorrence of his presence. Suddenly, however, in a way which would have been impossible to any but such an unmaidenly maiden, she tells him she loves him. After he has slain the first knight, she sings to him:

"O morning star (not that tall felon  
there,  
Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness,  
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),  
O morning star that smilest in the blue,  
O star, my morning dream hath proven  
true:  
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath  
smiled on me."

The general idea is that a 'lassie should na' woo,' even when she does it in the extraordinarily unladylike fashion adopted by Lynette. But when the second knight has fallen—not before Sir Gareth's spear, but because his horse slipped—she sings again:

"O sun that wakenest all to bliss or pain,  
O moon that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath  
smiled on me."

And, later, she blushes not to declare her affection openly to Lancelot. Surely she could scarcely have been lovable. In the poem, too, we have not one expression on the part of Sir Gareth—even after his identity is known—which argues any affection on his part for her, except it be when he says:

"And seeing now thy words are fair,  
methinks  
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his  
great self,  
Hath force to quell me."

When, therefore, we consider the scornful and unwomanly language of Lynette, and Gareth's utter indifference, we are inclined to wonder that Mr. Tennyson modified the legend.

For he that told the tale in older times  
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
But he that told it later says Lynette."

The language of the poem is very unequal; the above lines, which end the book, are almost prosaic, and there is a hard, unmusical ring about many others which is not usual in Mr. Tennyson. The indiscriminate use of 'ye' and 'thou,' often in the same passage, the employment of 'or' as synonymous with 'nor,' or such substantives as 'frights to my heart,' are not in accordance with the grammatical care and correctness shown in his earlier works.

But perhaps the most remarkable point about the manner of Gareth and Lynette, as opposed to

the matter, is the change which Mr. Tennyson's views appear to have undergone as to metre. Nothing is more admirable in his blank verse, as we have hitherto seen it, than the way in which he produces great variety of effect without any overbold infringement of the simple rules of prosody. It is often urged by some persons that there are no rules of prosody in English which cannot be broken with advantage. The opposite view is by them held to be mere little-minded pedantry.

'But most by numbers judge a poet's song,  
And smooth or rough, with them is right or wrong.  
In the bright muse, though thousand charms conspire,  
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire.'

is their theory. But, without being one of the multitude who

'Scit tendere viasum  
Non secus ac si oculo rubricam dirigit uno,'

I am inclined to maintain that elegance and beauty of language and rhythm, in accordance with rule, is better than elegance without rule. As in music, great composers sometimes break the laws of harmony, so in poesy great writers often throw over the rules of prosody. But these infractions are, and ought to be, exceptional. In all ages the greatest poets have faithfully followed the ordinary laws of composition, and, though they have on certain occasions gracefully avoided them, they have made such avoidance rare. In his earlier idylls Mr. Tennyson's verse is highly melodious and utterly free from wearying monotony, yet it is in entire agreement with the rules of scansion. Mr. Tennyson, moreover, has always appeared to think that the English language is capable of much prosodical exactness. In an attempt

to reproduce the hendecasyllabic measure of Catullus in English, he has succeeded in a most beautiful way in following the metre without forcing the language:

'Oh, you chorus of indolent reviewers,  
Irresponsible indolent reviewers,  
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
All composed in a metre of Catullus.  
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to  
tumble,  
So fantastical is the dainty metre.'

These lines are as elegant and yet as exact as the duodecasyllabic blank verse of 'Guinevere,' 'Enid,' or 'Elaine.'

In 'Gareth and Lynette,' however, we have a great change. I have expressed an opinion that there is a hard, unmusical ring in many of the lines of the poem which is most unusual in Mr. Tennyson. This may be as difficult to demonstrate as it would be to prove that the music of the 'Messiah' is more beautiful than that of an university graduate's composition. But, in saying that several lines in 'Gareth and Lynette' offend the laws of scansion, which in other books Mr. Tennyson carefully follows, I am saying that which can be proved by instances, and which I will, therefore, give a few instances to prove. Now, though the rules as to long syllables and short syllables are totally different from those which govern Greek and Latin, a marked difference nevertheless exists between the relative values of syllables in a verse. Call them long, short and common, light, heavy and medium, or emphatic, unemphatic and simple, as you will, the fact remains, that the employment of one for another is faulty. 'Perfect,' the adjective, and 'perfect,' the verb, could no more be used indiscriminately than 'pilus,' a hair, and 'pilus,' a battalion, could in Latin. The accent, quantity, or



weight of syllables in English is entirely conventional, as is proved by the words 'amazon' and 'orator;' but certain conventional laws do exist, which ought not to be broken. If, therefore, in the few words which I shall say on the prosody of 'Gareth and Lynette' before I close this paper, I use the classical terms trochee, iambic, and tribrach, I do so not in ignorance of the difference in the laws as to syllables to which I have referred.

A succession of perfect iambic lines, without any modification, would be wearisome. Mr. Tennyson, therefore, following the example of all writers of blank iambic verse, uses certain modifications with great effect. One of the most common of these is the substitution of a trochee instead of an iambus in the first foot of a line. One of the most spirited poems of Lord Byron begins:

*'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea.'*

And one of Mr. Tennyson's finest passages:

*'Liest thou there so low, the child of one  
I honoured, happy, dead before thy  
shame?'*

But it has generally been held that the first is the only foot in which a trochee is elegant. In 'Gareth and Lynette' we have trochees in all the odd places—

*'Follow the deer, follow the Christ the  
King,  
Live pure, speak true, right wrong,  
follow the King.'*

*'Gareth awhile lingered. The mother's  
eye'*—

the irregularity of which scarcely produces pleasure.

Another modification is the

substitution of a tribrach, or three very light syllables, for an iambus—

*'And a dream  
Of dragging down his enemy made him  
move'*—

where the change is elegant.

In 'Gareth' this plan is abnormally extended—

*'How he went down, said Gareth, as a  
false knight.'*

*'Linger with vacillating obedience.'*

*'There met him drawn, and overthrew  
him again.'*

*'That maddened her and away she flash'd  
again.'*

*'Thou art but a wild goose to question  
it'*—

*'His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I  
saw it.'*

where every sort of foot is employed for the iambus, are passages such as we may vainly seek in the earlier and, as I think, more polished of Mr. Tennyson's poems. It may be urged that it is not fair to take single lines; that each line has its value in reference to those which precede and follow it, and that, as a discord is acceptable in music, so a rough line may be acceptable in poesy. But the answer to this is, that, though roughness may be acceptable, lines which so grievously offend as those I have quoted cannot.

More instances might be selected of inharmonious versification, but I have mentioned enough to prove that Mr. Tennyson does not in his last work think it necessary to adhere as closely to the rules of prosody as he did formerly. If the Arthurian legend is to be completed by two more books, I certainly hope that the two which are yet to come will be more conspicuous for depth of thought and beauty of language than either 'The Last Tournament' or 'Gareth and Lynette.'

COURTENAY BOYLE.

## BRIMSTONE AND TREACLE.

THE servants of private individuals often have cause to complain of the whims or capriciousness of their employers; but it would be a mistake to suppose that we writers are altogether independent in our work. If we would retain the esteem of our master, the Public, we must carefully follow the changes of what is called his opinion; and frequently we are amazed to find him call for a sudden spasm of energy against certain crimes or criminals whose proceedings are at other times regarded with comparative indifference. Papists, garrotters, republicans, baby-farmers, have all within the memory of man taken their turn in the public pillory; the government and its agents have always been standing dishes; and of late we have found railway directors very convenient to fall back upon in dull seasons, inasmuch as they afford a good deal of sport for public indignation, and neither receive much injury nor excite much sympathy.

But last November a daily paper was successful in starting a new kind of game, and had a pretty smart run over grounds that have hitherto been kept closed to the public. It was discovered that at one of our most illustrious public schools the somewhat copious thrashing of the younger boys by the elder ones formed no inconsiderable part of the system of instruction; and upon this, and upon school discipline generally, an excited controversy took place, and the journal in question waxed so hot as to issue a proclamation for the total abolition of the rod, as a last remnant of barbarism unworthy to exist in an age when its leading articles had superseded

the precepts of Solomon and such like antiquated sages.

From this correspondence, and from other sources of information, I learned that two quite opposite opinions were enthusiastically held on the point in dispute. The one was that beating is in all cases beneficial for small boys, that they rather enjoy it than otherwise, and that when they grow into big boys they are almost invariably found eminently qualified to dispense this discipline to their juniors. The other opinion was, that little boys, when they are naughty, may indeed be sent to bed, but are on no account to be whipped, or they will certainly lose all sense of dignity, honour, and self-respect; furthermore, that the lives of boys who live under the rod are a burden to them, and that boys or men inflicting it can scarcely but be cruel, unjust, and generally odious. On the whole, the British public, through the mouth of its guide, philosopher, and friend, the 'Daily Telegraph,' seems to pronounce itself in favour of the latter opinion, while the former appears to be held in more regard by schoolmasters, many of whom, indeed, cling to the cane as tenaciously as the clergy to the Athanasian Creed. And when we consider how nearly the damnatory clauses of the latter have been submerged by the current of public opinion, we can have little doubt what is likely to be the fate of the former means of grace, unless the tide changes. Brimstone, exhibited in treacle or otherwise, may or may not be an useful and inexpensive medicine, but since the publication of 'Nicholas Nickleby,' we are confident that scarcely one school-dame in a hundred has

ventured to administer it to her young charges; and, in the same manner, the majority of schoolmasters have become exceedingly cautious, if not entirely abstinent, in the use of that metaphorical brimstone which formed so large a part of Mr. Squeers' educational system. And then, if we are to believe certain Cassandras of the day, we are ruining the moral and mental digestion of the next generation, seeing that we are feeding them too much upon treacle, which is a pleasant but unwholesome form of nourishment.

I should like to ask the public to put away sentiment and prejudice, and consider with me the whole question of Brimstone and Treacle—which is the more useful in education? in what proportion should they be combined, and in what manner administered? But it would be impossible to treat these inquiries exhaustively in a single paper, and I would rather confine myself to the discussion of the properties and application of that particular form of brimstone which has excited far more controversy than the general question, though it is really far less important. I hope thus to be of some service to anxious and doubtful mothers who are uncertain whether to send their sons to be 'tunded' at Winchester, or to be 'treated like members of the family' by Dr. H. U. M. Norfolk Howard, Ph.D., who supplies his pupils with unlimited diet and no corporal punishment. We will leave girls out of the inquiry; their case was treated two or three years ago in a manner which it is not desirable to imitate.

In the good old times brimstone was held in great esteem by the members of more than one profession. 'Drug,' said the doctor; 'Drub,' said the dominie; and the

divine, too, frequently said something else beginning with a D. It was no wonder that our juvenile forefathers crept unwillingly to school in those days, seeing that they bled as freely under the lash of the schoolmaster as afterwards under the lancet of the surgeon. We were horrified to learn through the 'Daily Telegraph,' that one gentleman had received a hundred and sixty thrashings in the course of his education at Winchester; but in 'Don Quixote' we read of 'three thousand three hundred lashes, which there is not a wretched schoolboy but receives every month.' Ascham tells us of boys running away from Eton for fear of its severities. Dr. Busby was wont to claim many eminent men of his day as the blossoms of his rod. In the pages of Smollett, Fielding, Marryat, and Dickens we have abundant evidence as to the rigour of scholastic discipline; and some of us, even under the mild sceptre of Victoria, are old enough to have had experiences of our own which may serve for a sample of the past. These experiences, however, do not always seem to have excited much vindictiveness; and even such a humane writer as Hood is found speaking kindly enough of the 'wholesome anguish' shed upon him in his boyhood.

But there were never wanting Molières to condemn the severities of other professions, and schoolmasters did not wield their weapons with universal consent. In the same book where we find Dr. Sangrado held up to ridicule, we read of a robber who ascribed his ruin to the fact that his indulgent parents would never let him be whipped; Steele, if I mistake not, writes most forcibly in the 'Spectator' against the prevalent barbarity of schools; and Fuller tells us of 'cockering' mothers who, in

his time, gave money to the master that he might spare the rod and spoil the child. Divines have, as a rule, been found to agree with Solomon on this point; novelists have been prone to the opposite view, as Thwackum and Squeers testify. And since novelists have become preachers a complete reaction has taken place in the public mind, and in education, as in medicine and theology, brimstone is more and more coming to be held harmful.

Sympathizing, on the whole, with the anti-brimstone party, and heartily anathematizing every man who, for his own profit or pleasure, administers unnecessary misery or medicine to man or boy, I may be allowed to reason with the public sentiment, and point out that it is running too fast to an extreme, and may some day rebound to another extreme, against which it may be equally one's duty to protest. We are in the right to long for health, to look forward to the day when no drugs shall be needful for us; but as long as human nature is what it is, so long shall we be unable to dispense altogether with medicines. And the medicine which has hitherto been supposed suitable for schoolboys is more wholesome and pleasant than seems to be generally believed.

The materialistic tendencies of the day are probably to blame for the excessive horror with which we have come to regard bodily pain and bodily punishment. There is one crime which we treat with special rigour, and one punishment which we reserve for it as especially formidable and degrading. With comparative impunity, a scoundrel may steal my purse, tamper with my shares, forge my name, asperse my character, wound my honour, seduce my child; but if, led by a more evil star, he go

so far as to lay a finger on my sacred windpipe, he is handed over to the whipping-post without benefit of 'Daily Telegraph.' And even then he will not be without sympathizers. The stripes which St. Paul gloried in are considered by some to be an unworthy torture for such an admirable product of modern civilization as Mr. Bill Sykes.

Now, schoolboys, however enlightened on some points, hold on this matter a doctrine which to some people seems more sensible and more Christian. A boy who would scorn to sell adulterated toffee to a friend, or to escape punishment by hiring a lawyer to deceive his judges, or to hide his selfishness under a cloak of decorous piety, does not think himself in the least degraded by being flogged when he is found in a fault. If such a punishment be inflicted kindly and wisely, and not without reason, the thought will probably never cross his mind that he is being treated cruelly, but, on the contrary, he will recognize that it has been given him for what his elders believe to be his good, and will resolve, with more or less firmness, not to deserve it again. Nay, more, if, as will sometimes happen in this world of mistakes, he be punished unjustly, the chances are that he will not sulk or grumble long, but may actually be found trying to take it as patiently and manfully as may be, and, when the smart has passed away, will feel no shame, unless he has allowed himself to howl like a garotter, and little or no resentment, except perhaps for three minutes. I am not speaking of peculiar cases or peculiar boys, but I am sure that the majority of English public schoolboys meet these accidents of juvenile existence in a spirit which may seem foreign to the

snug, selfish, indulgent morality so much in fashion at present, but which has been highly recommended by the precepts of a certain religion preached a long time ago by people who thought little of their bodies and a great deal of another part of the human organization.

In the eyes of some enthusiastic *laudatores temporis acti*, distance lends such enchantment to every view of youth, that they declare that being thrashed was almost an enjoyable incident of their school days. We smile at this absurdity, but we may well consider if there be not a germ of truth in it. It seems probable enough that the possible and not too imminent danger of being eaten by a lion or beaten by a cane does give a certain zest and interest to existence, which we can scarcely understand who are accustomed to handle no more deadly weapon than a razor, and from day to day make peaceful tramway journeys under the watchful care of the metropolitan police. One thing is certain, that to most boys the rule of the rod is not so grievous as that of impositions and tasks which appears to be succeeding it, and waxing stronger and stronger under the fostering influence of competitive examinations. The British public which has been so eager to rescue its boy from Squeers, is found willing enough to hand him over to Blimber, and looks upon his sufferings at the hands of that dignified pedagogue with wonderful apathy, inasmuch, probably, as they cannot be seen or heard so as to shock our overwrought sensitiveness to bodily pain. Writing lines and 'keeping in,' and such-like fashionable punishments, do not indeed leave marks or cause groans, but, with less deterrent effect, they are a greater trial to young elastic

spirits; and the British boy in nine cases out of ten would rather have a few thunderbolts now and then, and have done with it, than live in an atmosphere charged with a dull, heavy, headachy cloud of fault-finding and task-setting. The tenth case is that of the exceptional boy, who is, or has been, taught that he is of a peculiarly sensitive and shrinking nature, and should be educated at home or at some special school where it may be possible to provide for his disposition and prepare him in some special manner to encounter the ordinary rude shocks of grown-up life. And, again, in nine out of ten of such cases, I believe that this sensitiveness can be strengthened and tempered, not by cruelty or indulgence, but by wise, kind, and judicious management.

Of course it is possible to break a boy's spirit, and even his temper, by constant and severe chastisement; *ne quid nimis* must be our rule in this, as in everything. Is there a man whose spirit would not be broken by his having to fill up an income-tax paper every day of his life? All that is to be contended for is that the rod of our school-days is not, as some people seem to think, one of the worst evils of life which fall upon us, either then or when we are grown up. To be caned is unpleasant, but it is not so bad as to be bilious, or to be in debt. The birch was bitter and made sitting down a matter of discomfort, but it was nothing to the sting of that review in the 'Weekly Scourge,' and the difficulty one had in holding up one's head for a week afterwards, till custom hardened the skin in some degree to both inflictions. It was dreadful to hear the polite formula with which Dr. Busbison requested the honour of a business interview; but, oh! it

was a thousand times worse to hear that one's first darling article was *declined with thanks*. Did we ever think the pain more sharp and terrible than a single reproachful word from one whom we loved and honoured above all on earth? Do we think it worse than the thousand dull cares and sorrowful regrets which now meet us at every turn in life's pathway, and are not to be shaken off in a game of play, or, at worst, in a night of sleep? These boyish bruises which we speak of as so cruel are healed in a few hours; we receive wounds which are not skinned over for years, and of some sins we carry the smart to the grave, nay, leave it as an inheritance to our children's children. Sorely and surely are we all punished in the school of life, in which we only rise to become more our own most severe judges and our own most cruel correctors; and in a sick, restless, weary, discontented age, do we never long to be able to put penance, repentance, and absolution into a few moments of smarting and a few minutes of tears?

I believe, then, that we altogether exaggerate the harshness of the old-fashioned discipline, and call out against its cruelty with an unnecessary vehemence which were better directed against our own indulgence. In the case of some this zeal proceeds from ignorance of the nature of boys; with others from natural timidity, the effect of excessive severity used towards themselves in youth. But most of us, knowing well how we have been saved from bad actions and bad habits by punishment or the fear of punishment, take the indulgent view from a mere lazy acquiescence with that feature of the spirit of the age to which allusion has already been made, and would carry into the government of the rising genera-

tion the same weakness which makes us shudder to hear that slaves are being beaten and manacled on the coast of Zanzibar, while we are little troubled to know that free-born women are being daily driven into starvation, misery, and prostitution in the streets of London.

Here must be noticed a strange inconsistency of public opinion, which for years has been setting strongly against schoolmasters who follow the precepts of Solomon, but has winked at the existence in certain schools of what seems a far more unreasonable form of tyranny. Lately a case of gross injustice, however, has called attention to the fact, that, in certain schools, the elder boys have, and exercise, a far greater power of chastisement than their superiors; and we have had the cruelties of prefects and prepostors exhibited in all the forcible and gushing eloquence of the correspondents of the 'Daily Telegraph.' No doubt there is something wrong here. If grown-up men, with cooler judgment and greater experience, cannot be said never to make mistakes, it is to be feared that youths of eighteen are scarcely more fit to exercise the combined function of witness, magistrate, and executioner; and little is to be said against the proposal that the ground ashes of our scholastic groves be used in less profusion than has sometimes been the case. But those who have passed through the system of Winchester and Rugby are found to uphold it with a zeal which mere conservatism does not altogether account for; and when the first blush of surprise and indignation has passed away, even outsiders may see that here, as elsewhere, there are two sides to a question. The strongest argument against corporal punishment



is that it to some extent degrades, not the pupil who receives, but the master who inflicts it. The actual wielding of the rod comes more easy and natural to a lad of seventeen than to a clergyman of seventy, and it might therefore be well to retain the services of the former as the arm of the law, provided its head were upon older shoulders. The head of the state, whether he will or no, must be responsible for all that is done in its name; and he grievously fails in his duty if justice is turned into bullying. It is no use talking about the system of Arnold or of anybody, unless it is worked by a man wise and earnest as Arnold; and, unfortunately, such men are too rare in these days.

Other objections which have been made to corporal punishment are too slight to merit much attention. It is said to cause brutality in the case of both sufferer and inflicter. Are public school-boys found more brutal than the louts who grow up without having any of their loutishness licked out of them? Of course, many things in excess will foster brutality—too much beef and brandy to wit: for the birch is only claimed its proper and restricted place in the economy of civilization. Again, excessive severity will no doubt destroy all affection between master and pupil, and stir up in the latter's mind such feelings as seem to have animated some of our juvenile forefathers:

'I wold my master were an hare,  
& all his bookis houndis were,  
& I myself a loly hontere;  
To blow my horn I wold not spare.'

But, as the case now stands, would any one who knows what public school-life is, not laugh if he heard it asserted that confidence and affection between rulers and ruled is not more common

there than at schools where authority is weaker and fussier and more often called in question? Certainly, high spirit and independence do not seem to flourish less vigorously than elsewhere under the baleful shadow of the birch. We have read in Plato that unbridled democracy is nearest to tyranny; many of us have yet to learn that a firm and strong, and, if need be, severe government, is the only security for real freedom.

I set out with the intention of impartially considering this subject, and if I am found holding a brief for brimstone, it is because I believe it to be unduly depreciated at present. But if the scholastic Sangrados get the upper hand again, my pen, for one, shall be turned against them. Brimstone is an useful drug, but, like other drugs, it must be taken in moderation, only upon due occasion, and always in treacle, which condiment ought to be composed of equal proportions of care, sympathy, and common sense. One of the wisest things ever said about education was Joubert's maxim, that it ought to be 'warm and severe; not cold and soft.' It was once made cold and severe; the tendency, nowadays, is to make it warm and soft, and the race of puppies, prigs, and molly-coddles appears to increase upon us with mushroom rapidity. Harsh schoolmasters are enemies of happy boyhood; but they are not such harmful enemies as those easy guardians who are willing to allow conceit, laziness, selfishness, and insolence to grow up unchecked. With the fear of the 'Daily Telegraph' and the gushing school of sentimentalists before my eyes, I repeat that over-indulgence is the chief evil which is to be feared by our boys—God bless them!



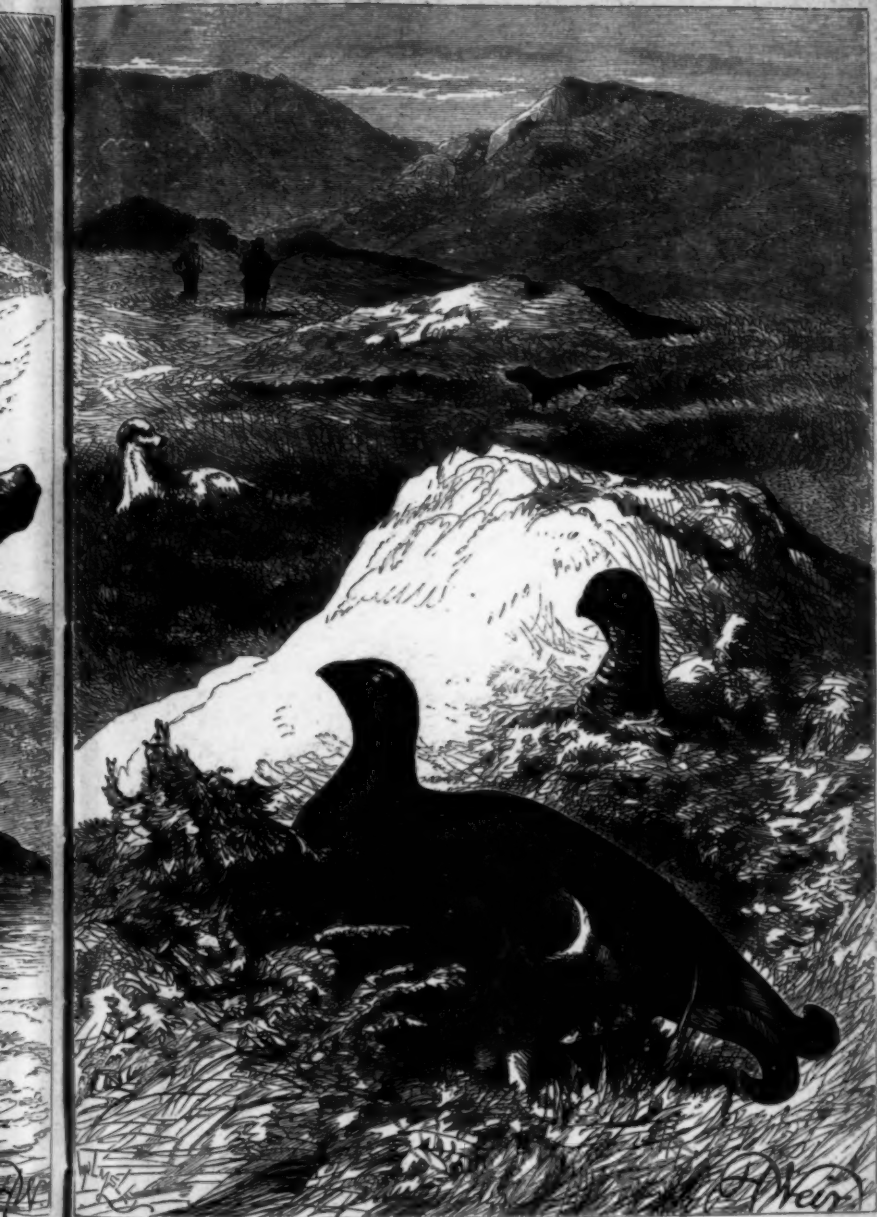
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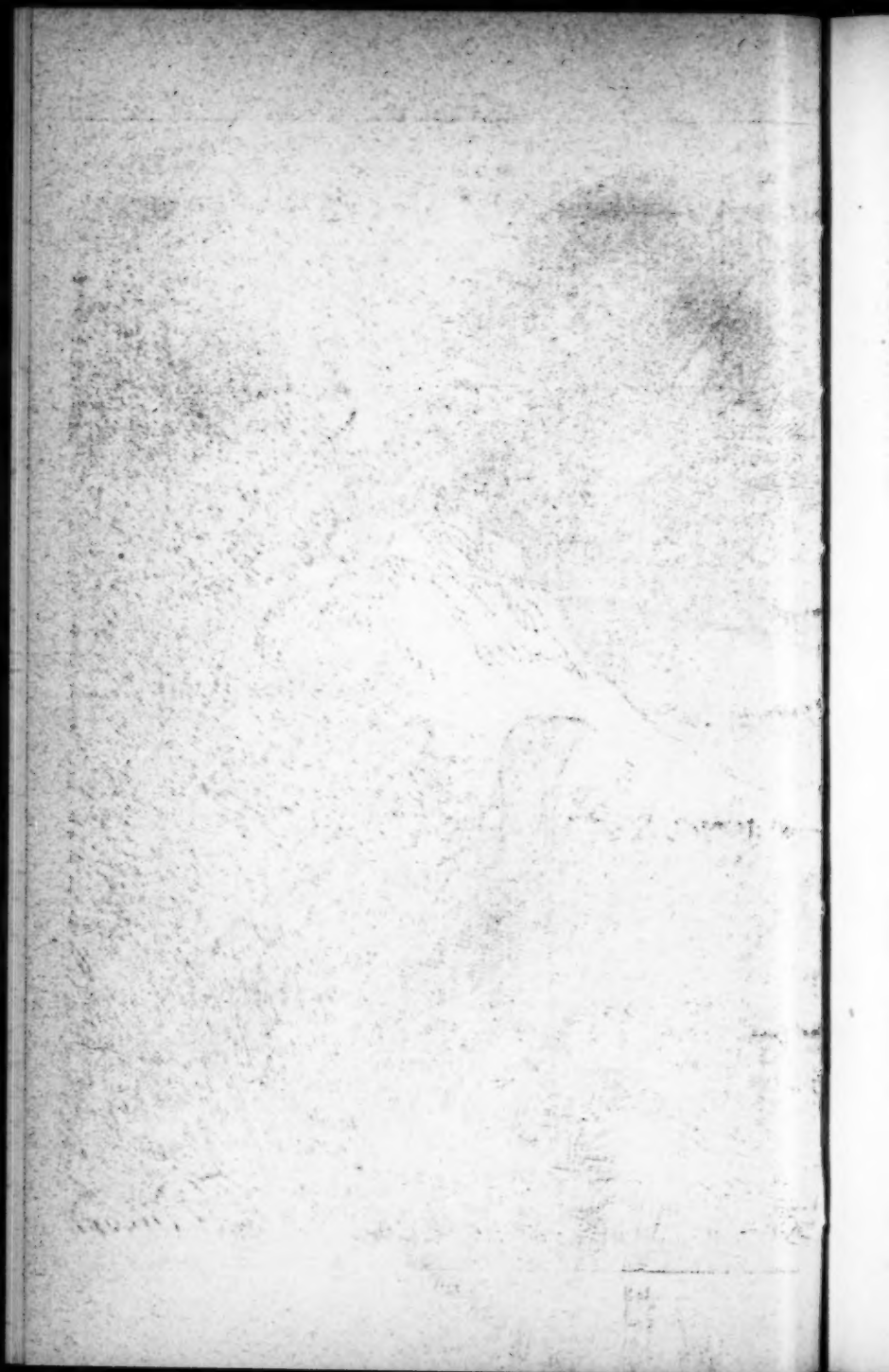
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FEATHER.



## LEAF BY LEAF, AND TEAR BY TEAR.

*(See Frontispiece.)*

YONDER, where the garden-close  
 Edges of the sea-cliff nears,  
 In her hand she holds a rose,  
 Shedding leaf by leaf like tears.  
 White and pink, and pink and white,  
 Falling 'gainst the sunlight there ;  
 Like her soft cheek's peach bloom bright,  
 Haloed with her sunny hair.  
 'Neath the rose-walk's gloom she stands,  
 Love's sweet pleadings shyly hears,  
 Shedding from her trembling hands  
 Leaf by leaf, like happy tears.

Yonder, where the barren sea  
 Laps against the grey cold shore,  
 White, and worn, and old, sits she,  
 Weeping, waiting, evermore.  
 Winter woods are waning fast,  
 Snapt are all her love dreams gay,  
 Brave sweet hope has sunk at last,  
 Dead and crushed beside the way.  
 One late rose within her hands,  
 Bends she o'er Hope's quiet bier,  
 Dropping, where she lonely stands,  
 Leaf by leaf, and tear by tear.

FRED. E. WEATHERBY, B.A.

## LAND AND SEA.

FIVE and twenty years ago it may be safely said that the minds of ninety-nine out of every hundred British schoolboys were swayed by an imaginative antinomy, the two rival powers of which were Lever and Marryat. The life, the atmosphere, the movement abounding in the novels of the authors of 'Charles O'Malley' and 'Peter Simple,' constituted the opposing poles to which the enthusiasm and the aspirations of every youngster *à la* ten to seventeen were irresistibly led with all the attraction of magnetism. Now Marryat was in the ascendant, now Lever: it was simply a question which of the two authors our schoolboy had last read. Now he dreamt of desperate sorties, well-planned ambuscades, reconnaissances, forlorn hopes, night attacks, terrible in their preparation, and splendid in their catastrophe: now of privateers and privateering, victories achieved in the teeth of the combined antagonism of Neptune and Vulcan, wonderful feats performed by urchin admirals in war sloops and *speronaros*, the ennobling discipline of the cock-pit, and the fierce delights of the midshipmen's mess. The secret of the charm in either case it was not difficult to discover. The existence depicted both by Lever and by Marryat was the very embodiment of every idea of liberty, of fun, of rollicking dash, and of prosperous pluck which a youngster could conceive. No base desires, no ignoble appetites were ever excited or encouraged by a single line which either of these writers ever penned. The chord of sympathy which they struck, if now and then somewhat extravagant in its note, had, at least, a ring always

manly, always healthful, invigorating, English, and pure. And it may be regarded as matter for special congratulation by the parents of many an English boy that the writings of Charles Lever and Frederick Marryat synchronized as closely as they did in point of the enthusiastic popularity which was their immediate lot. As regards their influences and effects, the novels of Marryat were a corrective to those of Lever, just as a strong dose of Lever was an antidote to Marryat. The youngster whose head was turned by the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, whose eye was dazzled by the glitter of cuirasses and the gleam of naked swords under the rays of a Spanish sun, no sooner betook himself to the pages of 'Midshipman Easy' or 'The King's Own,' than the hue of his vision was changed, and the field of his ambition altered. It was no longer the bray of trumpets and the clash of steel which thrilled his spirit: no longer the song of 'The Irish Dragoon' to which his heart beat tune, no longer the 'He would be a soldier' which was the refrain of his juvenile existence. The ocean usurped the place of the tented field; instead of the well-mounted troop parading through the town, the wonder of maidens on balconies, and the glory of the multitude in the streets, the image of a line-of-battle-ship rose before his eyes, the decks cleared for action, the Union Jack waving from the mainmast, the ringing cheer of the British tar, the booming of a cross-fire, the boarding of the enemy's vessel, the final victory, due as much as anything to the splendid exertions and the superhuman powers of a small

naval officer, aged fourteen years, who was the centre of the school-boy dreamer's vision, and who was, in point of fact, none other than himself. The result of these conflicting ambitions, following each other in succession so swift, was generally what might have been expected. The temporary exclusive possession of the boyish mind by Lever and Marryat in turns, terminated in a conviction that, on the whole, it might be as well not to attempt to realise the existence portrayed by either. Psychological authorities inform us that when contending motives exactly balance each other in the human mind, no action results, adducing, as illustrative of this proposition, the time-honoured instance of the homely quadruped standing betwixt two bundles of hay the same in size and in appearance. Something of the same kind was the consequence to the schoolboy world of a course of alternated perusal of Lever and Marryat. Reflection seemed to show that the attractions of a naval and a military career were as nearly as possible equal; and the youthful enthusiast, despairing of the power successfully to decide between these distracting claims, arrived at the conclusion that it might, on the whole, be as well if he devoted his energies for the present to Latin syntax or irregular Greek verbs. If Lever and Marryat have both inspired some proportion of young gentlemen in the fourth forms at Eton and Harrow with a passion that has found vent for itself in pestering their fond fathers to make application on their behalf at the Horse Guards and the Admiralty, the fond fathers in question may ascribe to the simultaneous enthusiasm which the fictions of the novelists of the land and of the sea inflamed that these passions passed off in the majority of instances so quietly.

The recent lamentable death of Charles Lever, and the appearance of such a memoir of Marryat as the existing materials could supply, offer a good opportunity for attempting a parallel between the two men, with respect to their lives and labours, in these pages. And it will be seen that the parallel which we now propose to trace is far from being purely fanciful or imaginary, but is at each point surprisingly close and exact. Each in his own literary sphere reigns supreme: each reflects in his writings, with curious fidelity, the spirit and the tendency of the life he describes. Points of contrast there are between the two men not a few; but it is the contrast, after all, which intensifies and substantiates the analogy. Both Lever and Marryat were not, so to speak, brought up to literature. In their infancy they were not fed upon printer's ink instead of pap; nor were they tucked up, as many writers undoubtedly have been, in proof-sheets. Both had passed through the very best of all public apprenticeships to the novelist's art—the apprenticeship of an active, a varied, a laborious career. Both, like Mr. Anthony Trollope in the present day, had outgrown the heyday of youth when they turned their hands to authorship. Marryat was thirty-seven when, in 1829, he published 'The Naval Officer.' Lever was thirty-three when, ten years later, he delighted the world with 'The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer.' In the course of a literary life of three decades Lever wrote at the rate of a novel a year. In the course of a literary life of less than two decades Marryat contrived to produce not fewer than thirty distinct works. The superabundant activity even of the two men is equally remarkable. As Lever always had other occupations besides those of the



pen to claim his attention and time, so too had Marryat. In the ordinary course of things, they existed for Lever: Marryat created them for himself. Lever was consul at Florence, at Spezzia, at Trieste—not very arduous posts, it is true, but still posts to which official duties and responsibilities attached: Marryat betook himself at Langham to scientific farming, and rising every morning at five to look after his stock with a zeal that would have done credit to one who had no thought in life but the improvement of land and the breeding of cattle. Neither Marryat nor Lever could have succeeded in getting through a tithe of the literary labours which they actually accomplished, unless they had been methodic workers. The method which with Lever was in great degree the outcome of his official experience, may in the case of Marryat be attributed to his naval training. The two men were thus both of them strengthened and prepared for literature by the regular routine of professional existence. At this point we are reminded of an important distinction between the novelist of the land and the novelist of the sea. Marryat reflected his own personal experience; Lever, save in his later novels, did not. Thus every fiction which flowed from the pen of the author of *'The King's Own'* is distinctly in a greater or less degree autobiographical. We will not say that out of Marryat's novels could have been concocted a life of the writer almost as complete as that which his daughter has given us, but there is no incident or episode in Marryat's career of a naval officer narrated in these memoirs which will come with much of novelty to the student of his novels. It is as if the reader of some history had been referred to the original

sources, documents, and authorities whence that history had been derived. So in the Lord Cochrane of the memoir we immediately recognize the Captain M—— of *'The King's Own'*, the Captain Savage of *'Peter Simple'*, the Captain Maclean of *'Jacob Faithful'*; we see that the ship life in *'Peter Simple'* was that of Marryat himself on board the *'Æolus'*, and that the real scene of the mythical *'Midshipman Easy'* was the deck of the *'Impérieuse'*. Again, we now hear that Marryat first visited the Barbadoes in the sloop *'L'Espiègle'*, and that he burst a blood-vessel in dancing at a ball in that island. Here we immediately recognize the dignity ball, and the side-splitting fun which attended it, of *'Peter Simple'*. Once more: before the *'Rosario'* was paid off, Marryat made several cruises with her against smugglers in the Channel; what else has he done than give permanent colour and shape to these experiences in the smuggling passages of *'The King's Own'*? Such instances as these might be multiplied indefinitely in the case of Marryat: there are scarcely any of the kind forthcoming in the case of Lever, with the exception of a few touches of realism which approach to personality; in the earliest and best known of his novels there are none whatever. It may be said that the imagination of the author of *'Charles O'Malley'*, *'Harry Lorrequer'*, and *'Jack Hinton'* is better than the experience of a score of other writers; and so, no doubt, it is. Only, the fact remains that there cannot attach to the romances of Lever that twofold value—first, as genuine works of novelistic art; secondly, as contributions to the social history of the times and classes with which he was concerned—that there does to the romances of Marryat. For

Lever was the novelist of war, and he himself had 'never set a squadron in the field,' of the army, and his knowledge of military affairs was exclusively that which an acute observer might collect from a regular course of mess dinners, after a preliminary initiation into the mysteries of garrison life; of dashing light-cavalry officers; of their inexhaustibly comic servants; of terrific charges in which he had never taken a part; of the crash and onset of hostile armies which he had himself never beheld. Let it not be supposed that we are for a moment disposed to underrate Lever's work—the joy of our own youth, as we hope it will be also the delight of our posterity. But we are comparing and differentiating the two men, and in such a task we should be guilty of a grievous critical sin if we were to omit what appears to us their prime distinction. As the word-painter of great battles, the impact and the recoil of opposing forces, the fierceness of the war tug, the dispersion of the combatants, the rally, the final triumph of the victors in the game of bloodshed—in the sketching of all these Lever is unequalled. But the splendid pictures which he gives us are struck out at a white-heat of imagination, and with no other aid than that of his own self-evolving consciousness. With Marryat, again, every feat of fortitude or skill that his heroes accomplish has had its prototype in his own experiences; and it will be found that the novels of Marryat approach to or recede from the standard of the highest excellence according as they do or do not reflect the vicissitudes of his own nautical career.

One of the consequences of this difference between the two men as novelists is, that inaccuracies and

infidelities to nature and reality, which have no place in the pages of Marryat, are not unfrequent in Lever. Marryat's pictures of the service at the time when Peter Simple and Jack Easy made their first cruise, are those of literal and historical credibility. The contradictions and inconsistencies of Lever's sketches of army life and army discipline thirty years ago have been repeatedly pointed out. Lever, it was true, had, in his own words, 'both a degree and a commission.' But it is much to be questioned whether Lever knew anything of the *vie intime* of T. C. D., which he has depicted in colours so preposterously impossible, if so irresistibly amusing, in 'Charles O'Malley.' A writer in 'Fraser,' on the first appearance of this novel, who, we make bold to say, was none other than Maginn himself, tackles its author with some severity, but with much justice and good-humour, on the evidence which he betrays of his own academic inexperience, or, at least, his partial experience. 'A Trinity College man,' says Maginn, for Maginn it assuredly was, 'would scarcely talk of an officer who does not exist in the university, namely, the *proctor*. He would have known that in T. C. D. the duties of the proctor are discharged by the *dean*, and those of the *bulldogs* by the *porters*. He would, probably, when he was using technical or slang terms peculiar to the college, such as *chum*, meaning fellow lodger, in the same set of chambers, and *jib*, for junior freshman, have said *skip*, and not servant. "In the evening," says Charles O'Malley, "our occupations became still more pressing: there were balls, suppers, whist parties, rows at the theatre, shindies in the street, devilled drum-sticks at Hayes's, select oyster parties at the Carlingford,

in fact, every known method of remaining up all night, and appearing both pale and penitent the following morning." Surely Mr. Lever must have mistaken the college for a caravansary, through whose open gates men can come and go at all hours, unquestioned and uncontrolled.' Then come other criticisms, to the effect that a Trinity man would not speak of being on the sick list at the same time that he was abroad in the Phoenix, and that he would not have sneered at 'the meagre fare of the fellows,' who, in fact, live only a trifle too sumptuously. 'Finally,' concludes the Fraserian, 'we presume that being a medical student, who perhaps attended the lectures on anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and botany, given by the university professors, but open to all who pay the courses, he picked up some names of persons and things, and some old stories, but that he really knew nothing of college life or of the university he has held up to ridicule.' Maginn himself was a staunch Trinitarian, and some of these strictures must be attributed to a spirit of patriotic partizanship. That Lever drew largely on his fancy for his facts illustrative of existence at the Dublin *academia* is likely enough, as well as that his personal knowledge of it was derived from pretty much those sources which Maginn enumerates; but the fact of Lever's diploma is as indisputable as his connection with the 'Dublin University Magazine.'

Let us cite another example of the poetic licence which Lever allows himself in his descriptive passages. Speaking of the cliffs of Moher, he alludes to 'pebbly beach,' 'minute peals of waves,' 'fishing-smacks,' 'golden straw,' 'fisherman's hut,' 'a road along the margin of the cliff,' 'tall and

ancient lime-trees,' as incidental accessories to the scene. Now, the coast of Clare is, as a matter of fact, without a single one of these pleasing features. For grandeur, desolation, and magnificence it is unsurpassed. It is an unbroken succession of dizzy precipices, rising suddenly out of the waves, or else with the merest fringe in front of them of jagged stones. But, for the most part, there is not a span of earth on which the fowl of the air might rest in his flight towards the New World between the perpendicular rocks of the Moher coast and the fury of the Atlantic tides.

We have spoken of Lever and Marryat as each displaying in their fictions an overflowing measure of what we may call the spirit of the two professions to whose literary service they dedicated themselves. Glitter and pageantry, pomp, show, and circumstance—these are proverbially and professionally dear to the military mind; Lever never loses an opportunity of dwelling on them. Whether it is a review in the Phoenix, or a march-past in the streets of some foreign capital; a parade in peace, or the death grip amid the hurly-burly of war; the entry of the French army into Berlin, as described in 'Tom Burke,' or the aspect of Paris during the occupation by the Allied Armies, as in 'Jack Hinton'—this tendency is equally conspicuous. Now, with naval men, on the other hand, everything sinks into insignificance in comparison with plainness, method, efficiency. Thus the descriptions which Marryat gives us of ships drawn up in order of battle, of the meeting of naval celebrities, of battles, and of deeds of daring, dwell as little as possible upon the ornamental accessories and accidents of the scene. There is

a straightforwardness, a simplicity, a severity in all these matters, essentially characteristic of the nautical man and the naval mind. If we are not mistaken, the influence of Marryat's intensely professional spirit may be seen, as contrasted with that of Lever, in other ways than this. His exactitude in setting before us scenes and places, his geographical and topographical precision—these are just what might have been expected in an author who had learned the value and the necessity of a rigid accuracy in the most practical of all schools; to whom, as he ploughed his perilous and watery course, a mistake of an inch might make all the difference between life and death. We are disposed to think that it was the habit of order and regularity acquired in the course of his sailor experiences which made Marryat, later on in life, aim at investing his farm in Norfolk with a model character. In their literary style, the very turn of their sentences and rounding of their periods, the terse brevity of the one and the elaborately sparkling rhetoric of the other, we may see continual traces of the professional distinction. While we are on this subject of the professional notes that characterise respectively the novelist of the land and of the sea, it is impossible not to be struck by the degree in which the two men are representative, in a way more significant than we have yet pointed out, of the spirit and history of their times. If the greatest authors are those who are the most complete exponents of the temper, and whose works are the most perfect reflexes of the events, of their times, then both Lever and Marryat must be allowed to overtop their contemporaries by head and shoulders. Just as Lever was the literary

organ of the military enthusiasm begotten by the success of the British army in the Peninsular war, so the taste which Marryat satisfied, and which, like every elemental force in literature, he also created—the passion for nautical adventure, the thirst for deeds of naval daring—was the natural and historical outcome of the triumphs of Nelson and Collingwood. Milton was not more the poet of Puritanism, Dante of mediæval Catholicism, Shakespeare of the opening drama of the modern age, Byron of its ripeness or consummation, than Marryat and Lever were the novelists of the splendid epoch of English history coincident with the period during which our fortunate isle was the supreme arbitress of the destinies of Europe, both by land and sea. A second Lever or a second Marryat may be, and we believe is, impossible, but only because the circumstances of national history which witnessed their literary development are no longer forthcoming.

Thus have we endeavoured to indicate some of the chief features of similarity and dissimilarity in the style and the treatment of this pair of incomparable writers. We will now enumerate such of their remaining points of literary contact as are necessary to complete and sustain the parallel we have commenced. And first, it is the common prerogative, both of Marryat and Lever, to combine genius and geniality. Their writings—and through their writings the story of their lives—command that affectionate excess of personal interest and sympathy which is only accorded by the public to a very few of those who labour for its literary amusement or instruction.

Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus  
Tentat et admixtus circum præcordia  
ludit amico.

Both Lever and Marryat have a keen satirical vein running through their writings; yet they can neither of them be called satirists. Theirs is the satire of Horace and of Sterne, not the ruthless invective of Juvenal, or the *scrissima indignatio* of Swift. They shoot folly as it flies, but the echo of each shot is drowned in a peal of ringing laughter and good-humoured merriment. Over and above this innate kindness of heart, equally conspicuous in Lever and Marryat, their novels are stamped by an individuality which serves to make the writer personally known to the reader. Hence the feeling, elicited by each successive work of the authors of 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Midshipman Easy,' that it was but a fresh opportunity offered to the public of improving an actual acquaintance which had begun years since; and hence, too, it was that, when Lever died last year, and Marryat died twenty-four years ago, a sentiment of keenly personal loss and sorrow went through the country; such a sentiment as that which followed the death of Thackeray and of Dickens, and which it is one of the truest tests of genius to create. Again, Marryat and Lever possessed the same insight into human character and human motives—the same happy faculty of investing typical personages with a variety of development and a diversity of colour. Neither Marryat nor Lever repeat themselves. Inferior artists are only able to shadow forth the same type in one individual; Lever and Marryat have a legion of characters for one and the same type. A comparison between the *dramatis personæ* of 'Peter Simple' and 'Midshipman Easy' will illustrate the justice of this view in the case of Marryat; while we have but to place in

mental juxtaposition the actors in 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Jack Hinton' to verify it as regards Lever. As the two men are alike in their highest excellences, so are they in their defects. Neither can produce a real or effective sketch of natural scenery unless there is a human presence in the foreground. Both are wanting in pathetic powers, and both fail artistically when they attempt the portrayal of feminine character. The women of Lever and Marryat remind one of what may be witnessed on the stage of half a dozen London theatres. Just as most companies possess an actress whose special mission it is to play one particular part, and who seldom ventures beyond the limits of the familiar rôle, and just as the *habitué* knows perfectly well beforehand that the delineation of character, though the name be altered, will be on each successive occasion identical, so the reader of Marryat and Lever, immediately he understands the place which a heroine is destined to fill in the action and development of the story, is able to identify her with some one or other of the few feminine varieties he has previously encountered.

It is more easy to trace the literary pedigree of the naval than of the Irish military novelist. Banim and Carleton may, perhaps, be mentioned as Lever's literary progenitors; but there is a wide interval of difference between them, and, like the younger Teucer, the son may boast that he is better than his sire. Lever inaugurated a style and a school. He has had a score of imitators, but he is really without predecessors in his peculiar line. Marryat, on the other hand, may be said to be the lineal descendant of Smollett. But we must not lose sight of the fact that, though

the author of 'Frank Mildmay' has his prototype in the ranks of English writers, his works of fiction were, at the time when they appeared, protests against the spirit that reigned supreme in the fiction of the day—a spirit of forced sentimentalism, vicious, enervating, in a word, essentially namby-pamby. Dickens and Thackeray were as yet unknown, and the public welcomed the honest, outspoken manliness of Marryat with a sense of superlative relief, immediately recognizing, in his quiet effectiveness of circumstantial narrative, no unworthy successor of Defoe. As a painter of nautical life, Marryat may be safely pronounced superior to Smollett, who himself drew from nature and life. But Smollett entered the navy at twenty and left it at twenty-five. Marryat was in active service from the year 1806 to 1830. It is customary to compare Fennimore Cooper with Marryat. Both, it is true, treated of naval subjects, but from very different points of view; for Cooper is nothing if not romantic. Captain Glasscock, the author of 'Sailors and Saints,' 'Land Sharks and Sea Gulls,' imbibed a considerable measure of Marryat's spirit; and Mr. Howard, author of 'Rattlin the Reefer,' Captain Chamier, author of 'Ben Brace,' Michael Scott, author of 'Tom Cringle's Log,' have attempted, not unsuccessfully, to catch his manner and reproduce his charm. Mr. James Hannay deserves a place, and a high one, among our naval novelists; but Mr. Hannay is too fastidious in his elaboration of epigrams, and his balancing of sentences, ever successfully to acquire the strength and the swiftness of movement which constitutes the real excellence of the novel of the sea.

To pass from the works of

Marryat and Lever to their lives, it is to be hoped that, at no distant date, we may have a biography of Lever which will give us as real a picture of the man as the volumes lately published by his daughter do of Marryat. Meanwhile, we will content ourselves with constructing such a picture of Captain Marryat's everyday life as the materials which Mrs. Ross Church has brought together render no difficult task. For that portion of his existence which was coincident with his naval career, the reader may, as has been already said, be referred to Marryat's own novels. But of his social experiences, both in London and at Langham—the estate which he purchased—no record whatever is to be found in his own works. It was in 1830 that 'private affairs'—to wit, his marriage with Miss Shairp—induced Captain Marryat to resign the command of his ship, the 'Ariadne,' and to leave the navy. He had been appointed equerry to the late Duke of Sussex, and he was compelled to remain near the person of the King's brother. His first residence was Sussex House, Hammersmith, which he had purchased of the Duke, and where, in the words of one who knew him well, 'he kept up a round of incessant gaiety and a course of almost splendid extravagance.' 'At Sussex House,' continues the writer,\* 'were held those amusing conjuring *soirées* which Captain Marryat used to have, in conjunction with his great friend, Captain Chamier, where they would display the various tricks of sleight-of-hand which they together had purchased and learned of the wizard of that day, and where Theodore Hook was wont to bewilder the company with his ventriloquisms, and make them laugh with his funny

\* 'Cornhill Magazine,' Vol. xvi. p. 149.



stories and imitations. There half the men to be met were men such as the world had talked of, and whose *bon-mots* were worth remembering. Marryat lived then in the atmosphere of a Court as well as in the odour of literature. The former air might easily be dispensed with without any loss of happiness, but one would have thought that intellectual society had become necessary for his existence. I remember him on the Continent some years later than this, at all sorts of places, at Brussels, at Antwerp, at Paris, at Spa, always living *en prince*, and always the same, wherever he went, throwing away his money with both hands—the merriest, wittiest, most good-natured fellow in the world. As soon as he was famous society was ready to applaud. Once at a German *table-d'hôte*, where I also was present (for I speak from personal recollection), he, in order to amuse his next neighbour, suddenly laid down his knife and fork, and looked to the other end of the table. The other knives and forks went down. He laughed, and there was a dead silence. "I'll trouble you for the salt," said he, or something equally commonplace, whereupon there was a general roar of laughter. "There's nothing like being considered a wit," he whispered. Later, I remember Captain Marryat living in Spanish Place, London. His establishment was not so superb as it had been at Sussex House; but his manner of living was as gay. It was an incessant round of dining out and giving dinners. At his table you met all the celebrities of the day. His intimate friends were men and women who had made their names of value. In Spanish Place it was I had seen him in association with Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, Ainsworth,

and John Poole, or with the beautiful Lady Blessington and D'Orsay; and then, after an absence of years, I travelled into Norfolk, to find him in a most out-of-the-way place.' *Apropos* of his retirement to Langham, Captain Marryat, in his unpublished fragment, 'Life of Lord Napier,' thus writes himself: 'Most sailors, when they retire from the service, turn to agriculture, and, generally speaking, make very good farmers. There appears something very natural in this. When Adam was created a man in full vigour, he naturally took to the labours of the field. And what is a sailor—who, although he has run all over the world, has, in fact, never lived on it—when you plant him on shore, but a sort of Adam—a new creature starting into existence, as it were, in his prime? For all his former life has been, as far as terrestrial affairs are concerned, but a deep sleep.' Into his new life as country gentleman and country farmer, Captain Marryat entered with as much of enthusiasm and of energy as his character might have led one to expect. The truth is, action was necessary to such a man, and the merely sedentary activity of *littérateur* was not enough to provide his exuberant powers with the work which they demanded. His farming was not financially a success, but it gave him an occupation in which he rejoiced, and from which his friends found it no easy matter to tempt him, even on a flying visit to London. Langham Manor was a cottage in the Elizabethan style, built after the model of one at Virginia Water belonging to George IV., with latticed windows opening on to flights of stone steps, ornamented with vases of flowers, and leading down from the long, narrow dining-room, 'where (surrounded

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by Clarkson Stanfield's illustrations of "Poor Jack," with which the walls were clothed) Captain Marryat composed his later works in the room behind. . . . When he wrote in the dining-room, he always selected a corner of the table that commanded a view of the lawn on which his favourite bull, "Ben Brace," was generally tethered.' The name of Captain Marryat, as a generous landlord and a kind friend to the labouring poor about his property, is still cherished in Norfolk. 'Dumpling,' Marryat's pony, was a character in himself; mounted on him 'the Captain,' would 'ride about his farm in all weathers, attired in a velveteen shooting-coat, mud-bespattered highlows, and a "shocking bad hat."' The writer in the 'Cornhill' tells a pleasant story about this historical steed, Dumpling, who had 'a spiteful temper,' which, it appears, he never omitted any opportunity of showing. 'Marryat once put two of his children upon the pony, when he himself was occupied about some farming operations, and sent them across the meadow. So long as he was in sight, Dumpling trotted steadily along, but no sooner did he find himself unobserved, than up flew his heels, and both the little girls went over his head. Back they came running to their father, to complain of "Dumpy." "Come here, sir," shouted Marryat to the conscience-stricken pony. Dumpling saw a whip in his master's hand; he glanced first one side and then the other, while Marryat waited for him to come. He might have turned tail and raced all over the meadow; but, after a moment's reflection, he hung his head penitently, and, running to his master, thrust his head under Marryat's arm. The moral of it of course was, that Dumpling did not get a whipping.' Though Captain

Marryat had bought Langham in 1839, he had scarcely settled regularly down till 1843. But when once settled; he was not to be moved. Now there is a dinner given to Charles Dickens, and a special invitation is despatched to Langham; now some theatricals, with an unusually promising cast, are on the *tapis*, and Mr. Forster writes as follows: 'Look at the bill enclosed; it is all Dickens' doing. I am a lamb at the slaughter. But *will you come up?* Stanny (Stanfield) and all of us are in it. Dickens plays "Bobadil." I have kept my best place for you. If you will come, tell me, and you shall have the card of invitation by return of post. Many are coming from greater distances than Langham. *Do come.* I shall be so pleased to hear "off, off," and "fling him over" (for hear them I suppose I must), from your friendly voice. Now be a gentleman—a trump—a first-rater—and come special for the play. Tickets are at a premium, I can tell you.' This urgent appeal is only one out of many which Marryat received at Langham, and which he, without exception, steadfastly resisted. He writes, even to an intimate friend, to say that 'he has a horror of publicity, and that the very idea of taking the chair at a meeting is enough to keep him away.' In August, 1847, the ailments from which Marryat had long suffered became alarming, and in that month he writes to his sister, that he had twice broken a blood-vessel, and had lost two stone in weight. 'On the early morning of the month of August, 1848, just about dawn, he was lying apparently asleep, when his housekeeper, who had nursed him most faithfully throughout his long illness, and was watching beside him at the moment, heard him murmur

a sentence of the Lord's Prayer; as he finished it, he gave a short sigh, a shiver passed through his frame, and he was gone.'

The novels which Captain Marryat produced during the later years of his life, in the midst of his retirement at Langham, have not met the intense popularity which his earlier works have permanently secured for themselves. 'M. Violet,' 'Valerie,' 'Olla Podrida'—the latter quite the prettiest of his short stories—will live, but not with the same continued freshness and exuberance of vitality as 'Peter Simple,' 'Midshipman Easy,' and 'Jacob Faithful.' As much may probably be said for the fictions which were the results of the closing years of the literary labours of Lever. But it was the good fortune of the author of 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Charles O'Malley' to achieve excellence of a very high character in a line totally distinct from anything he had previously essayed in some of his penultimate productions. 'Sir Brooke Fossbrooke' and 'That Boy of Norcott's' are equal to anything which Lever ever wrote; considered as a work of novelistic art, the former of these may, indeed, be pronounced superior to anything he had previously accomplished. The character of Dudley Sewell and his wife, of the old Irish judge, the grouping and the subordination of the minor *dramatis persone* were specimens of literary workmanship such as Lever had not given us before. Close upon a quarter of a century has passed since Marryat died; more than a quarter of a century passed since the first of Lever's novels appeared, and the books of each writer continue to hold their own; more than this, those who read these books first as boys, can turn to them again, now that they are men of middle age, with all the

zest and pleasure that attended their first perusal. This one simple fact is the highest test of truth to nature and fidelity to life to which a writer of fiction can be submitted. In his 'Diary in America,' Marryat tells the following charming story:—'I made this morning a purchase at a store, which an intelligent little boy brought home for me. As he walked by my side, he amused me very much by putting the following questions: "Pray, Captain, has Mr. Easy left the King of England's service?" "I think he has," replied I; "if you recollect, he married and went on shore." "Have you seen Mr. Japhet lately?" was the next query. "Not very lately," replied I; "the last time I saw him was at the publisher's." The little fellow went away perfectly satisfied that they were both alive and well.' Such a power as these questions of the small American implies, is a heavy responsibility for the author who possesses it; and no author could have exercised it with an effect more uniformly beneficent than Marryat, and, it may be added, Lever. The tone and temper of Marryat's novels are those with which English parents would like to see their sons imbued—the lessons embedded in the midst of all their pleasantries are those which every lad must learn by heart, who would steer a straight course through life—lessons of constancy to purpose, loyalty to duty, loyalty to friends. And the same thing is true of Lever. Is the devil to have all the good tunes to himself? Is virtue to be perpetually condemned to wear the mien of dulness? Marryat and Lever are, above all things, national writers, and of two national writers such a boast as this is a mighty one to be able to make.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

## LADY DUGDALE'S DIAMONDS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

'SHE was not My Lady then.' Thus Mr. Thomas Walters, the rotund, rubicund, good-tempered landlord of that well-known village inn, 'The Dugdale Arms,' which hangs forth its sign, resplendent with all the colours of the rainbow and a dazzling amount of gold emblazoning, across the green, friend or stranger must pass by, if he wish to reach Oakhill, Lord Dugdale's ancestral seat.

She was not My Lady then, although we often called her my lady, for she had married in order to get as near having a right to be so addressed as an Honourable could bring her; and I name my story 'Lady Dugdale's Diamonds' for that reason.

There were plenty of heirs between her husband and the title when we took up housekeeping at Johnesborough, but they are all dead and gone.

Mr. Will, my old master, is now Earl of Dugdale. I have known him hard up for a guinea, and this day he can hold his own with the wealthiest in the land.

He is just the same as ever, though—just the same careless, kindly gentleman we all loved so dearly.

There is much talk in these days about servants caring for nothing and no one, save their own interests and their own selves. For my part, I say there always were and there always will be some masters and some mistresses no servant could like.

I never served any one, except Mr. Will, and I can honestly say I would have gone through fire and water for him.

The Honourable William Patteringham—that was his name and

title. My father chanced to be one of the tenants on the Oakhill estate; where Mr. Will, an orphan, was brought up by his uncle, the seventh Earl; and many a morning we two little lads whipped the trout stream, or surprised Puss at an early toilette, or startled the partridges amongst the stubble.

Ah! that was a rare life! I would not get up now at two o'clock in the morning to land the finest trout that ever swam—but, look you, I would give all I am ever like to be worth in this world to wish to cross the dewy meadows at the first streak of day, and feel my heart bound with an indescribable joy at sight of the fields whence the grain had been carried, brightening as the sun rose and climbed higher and higher.

Well, it only comes to this—I was young and I am old, and other lads whip the trout streams and flush the partridges and astonish Madame Hare; for the world is going and coming, and I am going—and some one else is coming fast after me, and there is somebody behind him, and somebody else following that one in turn.

Ay, it is a queer road we travel from boyhood on, and ever on, as fast as ever our feet will carry us, till we reach a point when we want to turn back for good, and never be anything again but boys for evermore.

You will wonder at a fat old fellow like me—nothing but a village innkeeper—having such notions as these; but if you had known Mr. Will when he was a young man, you would not be surprised at my having learned what

has since passed many a lonely hour of my life.

He was the most devil-me-care young gentleman I ever did see—always in debt, always falling in love—quite as often falling out of it—in one way the most reckless, restless, extravagant master a man could have had, and yet in another, thoughtful, and occasionally even sad.

‘Why did my uncle bring me up to all this, Tom?’ he would say sometimes, pointing to the useless and expensive articles he gathered about him. ‘Why did he not put me to some honest calling? If he had not a living to spare, why could not he have made a lawyer of me? I think, Tom, I might have been Chief Justice myself, issuing urgent invitations to various poor wretches to appear before his most gracious Majesty, instead of having to decline his most gracious Majesty’s pressing invitations as best I can. It is enough to drive a fellow mad. I have the tastes, habits, extravagances of ten thousand a year, and I never had but a bare five hundred pounds per annum, which went to the Jews (would the race had never been permitted to leave Babylon) half a century ago, or thereabouts.’

That was his style, and a man, no matter how stupid he might be, could not help brightening up a little under such an employer.

We are very much like horses; a slow one always tries to keep pace with a fast goer—I did. For instance, I did not understand what Mr. Will meant by an invitation to appear before George the Fourth, till I had read the next writ which my master flung down on his dressing-table with an oath, when that little black-guard, Simeon—a true descendant of him who, with his brother Levi, is stigmatized in Holy

Writ, as ‘having instruments of cruelty in their habitations’—touched him on the shoulder, and asked him, rather pressingly, to spend the evening at Mr. Absalom’s in Cursitor Street.

The wretch had contrived to reach even the innermost sanctuary by representing himself as a hair-dresser and his man as an assistant.

‘Good-bye, Tom,’ said Mr. Will, after I had taken off his dress-coat and helped him on with another, holding out his hand just as if he had been my equal—and by that I knew he felt it dreadfully—‘Good-bye, and keep up your spirits. I will disappoint these cursed Jews one of these days, if it be even at the expense of an ounce of lead.’

And then, with a mocking bow, he turned to Simeon and said, ‘It is not to your tribe I am alluding, my dear fellow. I fancy it has not been all milk and honey with your branch of the family, and that the rough part of the labour fell to your share, even at the Tower of Babel. Possibly you did the hod-work there, which would have made even an Irishman dizzy.’

And so he went—a gentleman, every inch of him—for the last time to Cursitor Street.

You may guess how I felt after he was gone. Every time these fellows had him in their clutches, it seemed harder and harder for him to get out of them again.

All he owned had gone long and long before. His relatives would neither give nor lend him a shilling. His friends were getting tired, and I could not wonder at it. One gentleman may be willing enough to help another at a pinch, but it is not in Christian nature to like spending good money to fill a Jew’s coffers.

I sat down in the dressing-room

he had just left, with his clothes littered about as he had thrown them off, and wondered where we could turn for help—wondered till I grew tired with casting about in my mind whether there was one left who would see him out of this trouble, and if so, where that one ought to be looked for.

And then, supposing somebody could be found now, who would help him on the next occasion?

Things had been getting worse and worse with us for a long time.

My head was young then, but it grew giddy reckoning up, or rather trying to reckon up, what he owed, and how the tangle was ever to be unravelled, when who should walk in but a lawyer who had seen Mr. Will through with a few bad scrapes.

Though on the last occasion he had vowed he would never advance another sixpence, still my heart leaped into my mouth for joy at sight of him.

'Your master is gone to Berkeley Square, Walters, I suppose,' he began. 'I saw the Countess was entertaining, as I passed, but I thought I would take my chance of finding him dressing, and late, as usual. Will you tell him he had better keep out of the way for a little while? Marston is going to arrest, and two or three more will follow suit. Thought he would like to know. What an extravagant sinner it is!' he added, looking at the array of articles on the toilette-table; and he would have gone with that, but I shut the door, and implored him to listen to me.

My head, as I have said, was dizzy with thinking, and planning, and scheming, and I was thankful to find any one to speak to about our trouble.

Mr. Will's debts had that night, so to speak, marshalled themselves before my eyes, and I faced them

as he would not have done, and talked of them as he could not.

Perhaps I was wrong to talk so freely of things that I only knew in confidence; but I could not help it. I loved Mr. Will with all my heart, and those Jews, with their evil faces, and heavy gold chains sprawling over their gaudy waistcoats, and huge rings on their dirty fingers, had filled me with a disgust and hatred that I could not have expressed in words.

Although he happened to be a lawyer, Mr. Perrin was a gentleman. As a rule, I do not think much of lawyers and such like; but they say every rule has its exception, and Mr. Perrin was an exception to mine.

I think he must have been fond of Mr. Will, too. Lawyers, even the worst of them, I have noticed, entertain a sort of sneaking fondness for wild characters, for reckless, improvident chaps, such as Mr. Will used to be. It is the redeeming point about them. There may be a providence about it, too, as there is about a mother being fondest of her lame, or blind, or imbecile child. Anyhow, it was not for the money he got out of Mr. Will, his lawyer looked after his affairs *then*. He is making a good thing of the Earl of Dugdale's estates now; but, Lord! which of us then ever dreamed he would some day reign at Oak-hill?

I, for one, never could have served him as I did, with a perfectly single heart, had such a change seemed probable, or even possible.

I stuck to him as one might to a cheery comrade in a bitter fight, or a shipwrecked companion to a—but there, why do I go on talking such nonsense?

He was a poor master and I a poor servant, and he made me his friend, and I loved him, for all he

was the Honourable William Patingham and I Tom Walters; and I think, for the same reason that I was fond of Mr. Will, Mr. Perrin liked him too.

With a very grave face he listened to what I had to say, and then he remarked—

‘I had no idea things were so bad as all this comes to, Walters.’

Then I made answer—

‘Sir, they are worse; and you would think so too, if only in a minute, so to speak, I was able to remember all about everything.’

‘You have remembered enough,’ he said, and sat for a minute quiet. Then he got up to go, but stopped to observe—

‘I wish your master would follow my advice.’

‘He would follow anything, sir, that meant ease of mind and a berth in the Colonies,’ I was bold enough to reply.

‘Following my advice would mean ease of mind and a comfortable life in England.’

‘Ah! sir, I don’t think his pride would let him do that,’ I answered, for I thought Mr. Perrin wanted my master to pass through the Court, and I knew it would go sorely against the grain to have such a proposal even made to him.

It was not the fashion then, as it is now, for noblemen to shuffle off their debts in that way like any butcher or greengrocer; and it may be that the very idea of its being supposed Mr. Will could so demean himself made me speak quick and sharp; but Mr. Perrin only laughed, and said—

‘His pride did not stand in the way of his getting into debt, and ought not to stand in the way of his getting out of it; it is not so much his pride though as his prejudices.’ I looked in a dictionary, after he went away, to learn what he meant by the last

word, but the dictionary explanation did not help me.

Next day he came back again; ‘Marston has been paid,’ he said, and your master has left Cursitor Street; but I have advised him not to come back here until an arrangement can be effected with the tribes of Israel; so if you put up some of his clothes I will take them with me.’

‘Can’t I go to him, sir?’ I asked.

‘No, you had better stay where you are, and answer questions. All you know about Mr. Patingham is, that he was arrested last night, and you have not heard from him since. You need not mention my name in connection with his affairs.’

‘No, sir. Please give my duty to Mr. Will, and I hope he won’t be long away.’

‘If he follows my advice he will never come back here,’ said Mr. Perrin.

But Mr. Will did come back. Months after that night when Simeon arrested him, he walked into his rooms as if he had only left them an hour before.

‘Yes, Tom, I am free,’ he said, in answer to my awkward expression of delight at seeing him once more, ‘and yet I have lost my liberty—there’s a paradox!—at least I shall lose it at half-past eleven to-morrow morning.’

Still I was so stupid, I did not see his meaning.

‘Oh! sir,’ I exclaimed, ‘I was in hopes all that was over.’

‘All what was over?’ he repeated; then burst out laughing—‘Oh! the Simeon and Levi business. So it is, Tom. No more arrests, unless I am a greater idiot than I take myself to be—no more royal invitations, unless they are dated from Windsor Castle—no more credit—everything is to be cash on delivery for the future with



Will Pattingham—ironically styled *The Honourable.*

'Have you had money left you, sir?' I asked; 'or,' I added, a light breaking in upon me, 'is it—'

'Yes,' said Mr. Will, 'it is—' My heart leaped up into my mouth, and then fell back again like a leaden weight. I tried to wish him joy—I tried to look cheerful and pleasant, but it would not do. He saw the news had shocked me, and so he went on—

'All men must die, you know, and I suppose most men must marry; at any rate, I must; and therefore it behoves me to make the best of a—good bargain;' he finished after a pause so slight, that many a one might not have noticed it. 'The lady is wealthy, generous, and kind; my people are delighted with the match; they make no objection on the score of family—why, indeed, should they? Her grandfather on the one side bore a name better known throughout England than that of Pattingham—Smith. Her grandfather on the other side came of an almost equally old race—he was a Jones. Her father thought the two names too good to be divorced, and so dubbed himself "Smyjthe-Johnes;" after which he died, and bequeathed his cognomen and fortune to his only daughter Amelia Selina Annabella, whom I am to marry to-morrow.'

'Are—are you going to take me with you, sir, on the wedding trip?' I asked, wondering whether the old life was indeed all past—whether with his marriage a life so utterly new was to begin, that it should mean for him no Tom—for me no Mr. Will.

'I am afraid not,' he said, with one of his old queer smiles. 'You like a pretty face, Tom, and it would not suit for you to be flirting with my wife's maid. The future Mrs. Pattingham has strict

ideas, and might not approve of any indiscretion. There—I declare the fellow has tears in his eyes. Tom, do you think my marriage is going to part us? Did you think me such a cold-blooded monster as to contemplate flinging over an old friend—for you are my friend? I have been considering into what good berth I can slip you in the new establishment, and have decided that you shall be butler. You must, therefore, go down to Johnesborough, and have everything ready for our return. We are not to reside much in London. I mean to become a model country gentleman. I shall interfere with the poor people, and see that the children learn their catechism.

'Do you know, my grandmother is so charmed with my prospects that she has sent me her diamonds to present to the bride. They came to her, not through the Pattinghams, but some of her own more august progenitors. They would have been a catch for the Jews, in the good old times—eh, Tom?'

I answered him with what spirit and heart I could muster. The old times had often been bad enough; but it seemed to me the new times were promising to be worse still.

We were entering upon evil days, I thought to myself—days when the hours would pass regularly, with all life and hope and enjoyment taken out of them. This was what had come of following Mr. Perrin's advice. In my soul I cursed him, for which, if that gentleman were here now, I would humbly beg his pardon.

'You will let me know where you are going to be married, sir?' I said, after awhile. 'I should like—'

'To be present when the bolt is drawn,' he interrupted. 'Well,



I don't know that there need be any difficulty about the matter. The sacrifice is to take place at St. George's, of course; and—yes, you may come—only, Tom, my lad, if you feel surprised at anything in the ceremony, try not to look so, there's a good fellow, and keep a still tongue afterwards; and with that he held out his hand, and I—well, you can think what you please about it; but we had been boys together, and I loved him, and he seemed going away from me for ever. So I kissed it, and then broke out crying like a woman—or a fool.

'Cheer up, Tom,' he exclaimed; 'when we come back you will know Mrs. Pattingham for the true, honest, amiable creature she is. She has been liberality itself to me, and I only hope I may be able to make her as good a husband as she deserves. I mean to try. Heaven knows I do,' he added, and then he went off humming an opera air; and I thought I had seen the last of light-hearted, easy-going Mr. Will.

The next morning I thought so more than ever. As the bride came down the aisle, leaning on her husband's arm, I caught a glimpse of her face for the first time. I knew then the part of the ceremony he imagined would surprise me, and I turned my face towards the wall that no one might see the amazement I knew was written on it.

She looked old enough to be his mother. She was ugly enough to have been burnt for a witch in the days when witches were burnt. She had no figure—she was no shape—she had no presence; and her tall, handsome, winning, gracious, well-born husband had sold himself for life to this woman to get out of the hands of those Jews. Though I was in a church, I prefixed a word to Jews that I

won't repeat here; and meeting Simeon in Piccadilly, on my way home, I had much ado to keep from knocking him down.

I wish I had now. The will to do it and the opportunity never dovetailed so neatly together afterwards.

But it is the story of the diamonds I was to tell, you remind me. Patience, I am coming to that. You have now the main threads of it in your hand. I served the Honourable William Pattingham, who, marrying Miss Smythe-Johnes, promoted me to be butler at Johnesborough.

To Mrs. Pattingham, Lady Dugdale—the Dowager, I mean—presented her wonderful diamonds, which Mr. Will sent to Rundell and Bridge to be reset. His wife wanted to wear them on the occasion of her presentation at Court. Thus the diamonds were at the jewellers, I at Johnesborough, and Mr. Will and his wife on their wedding-tour.

It was very kind of Mr. Will, giving me the butler's place at Johnesborough; but I could not help wishing he had arranged that I should learn my duties before going there.

When a stern and stately house-keeper, who had been at Johnesborough in the time of Smythe-Johnes, addressed me, I wished my shoes were big enough to hide in. However, I took heart of grace, after awhile, and gave her my confidence—told her how I had been Mr. Will's own man—how of his goodness he had chosen me to fill the post of butler; how I knew little or nothing of what a butler was expected to do; and, to wind up all, how thankful I should be if she would give me a few hints.

Over her spectacles the old lady looked at me for a minute. Then

she said, 'Young man, you will do; you are modest and ingenuous.' (Somehow, it seemed to me I was then always running up against people who used long words.) 'I will instruct you myself. Few persons, male or female, know more of the nature of a butler's duties than I.'

Which was quite true. Mrs. Barrett deserved all the praise she was good enough to bestow on herself.

By the time Mr. Will returned, I had learned enough not to disgrace his recommendation. Indeed, my Lady herself seemed surprised at my progress, for she said to me one day, 'I had no notion, Walters, you had so correct an idea of the duties of your position. Even my dear father could have found no fault with the manner in which you discharge them.'

This was high praise from her Ladyship. The doings of Johnes of Johnesborough seemed, in those days, right in the sight of his daughter—as right as her own doings do now.

No one ever can tell how a marriage will turn out. I am sure, had any person told me, that day in St. George's Church, I should some time consider my master had done a good thing for himself in taking Miss Johnes for better for worse, I must have laughed out in very scorn and bitterness; but the pair had not been long back at Johnesborough before I began to believe she was the very wife for Mr. Will.

If she was fussy and fidgety—and who could doubt her being both?—Mr. Will was too much the other way. She kept things together; she prevented his getting into debt again; she led him into paths of respectability so fenced in by ideas, and traditions, and responsibilities, and proprieties,

that I think it would have been next to impossible for any man to break bounds, even had he wished to do so. But Mr. Will did not wish. For the first time, he had a chance given him of doing well; and he was not above taking advantage of it. I know he felt his wife had given him all she had it in her power to bestow, and that it behoved him to try to make her some return. When he married her there was not a morsel of love on his side; but it grew. Day by day, month by month, year by year, it went on putting out buds and shoots; and now I doubt if there is a man in the county fonder of his wife and the mother of his children than William, Earl of Dugdale. And as for the Countess, I think she gets younger every week, and she is not half so plain as she was when she relieved Mr. Will of his debts, and took it in hand to make a steady, respectable, and respected country gentleman of him.

But I am running ahead too fast. When she came home to Johnesborough I did not much care for her, and I liked her ways still less; fussing here, and fuming there; worrying herself about the merest trifles, and nothing to be put out of the regular course, even for a moment.

If she had got hold of any gentleman less easy-natured and sweet-tempered than Mr. Will, she would have driven him, or he would have driven her, mad in three months. Even Mrs. Barrett confessed that in some things Mrs. Pattingham was difficult to please.

I tried to please her for Mr. Will's sake, and was making way in her good graces, when one day there came a letter from some place very far away, where old Lady Pattingham, the Dowager, generally spent three parts of the year, saying she was dangerously

ill, and summoning Mr. Will and my Lady to her side.

Mr. Will was her favourite of the whole family. She had done a great deal for him, to my knowledge—paid debts for him often, and given him money, together with a large quantity of good advice, and then, finding that nothing did him any permanent good, she tired, like the best of his friends, and returned the letters he sent her unopened.

Still her heart was with him, everybody knew; and her conduct in the matter of the diamonds proved that she was more than ready to forgive, when once she saw a hope of reformation.

I do not think it occurred to Mr. Will that she had any thought of making him her heir; not so, however, with my Lady. She was not mercenary exactly, and yet she was sufficiently worldly-wise to know it would be folly to throw away the chance of a legacy, and accordingly she would hear of no delay on this occasion, but was even more anxious than Mr. Will to start at once.

Anyhow, to make a long story short, they left Johnesborough the same day the news arrived. In a letter Mr. Will wrote to me from London he said neither his uncle nor the Countess was in London, that he would not wait for the Earl's company, but travel on without delay. The period of his return must be uncertain; but he would send instructions home from time to time.

Thus, once again we were all quiet at Johnesborough; and mighty dull I found it, after London.

True, one day we were all flung into a state of excitement by a visit from the Earl. Posting up from the North, where he had been staying, he took Johnesborough in his way, and put the footman,

who answered the door, into a state of bewilderment by asking to see me.

'Is Thomas Walters here?' inquired his Lordship; 'send him to me directly;' and, without waiting to be asked, he walked into the library, the door of which chanced to be open.

I found the Earl in one of his tempers.

What was the meaning of Mr. Will being sent for, and he not? Was not the dying lady his mother, and who could be nearer to her than he? What had Mr. Will said? Did I know who sent the letter? Had I heard anything of its contents? Though I was but a servant still, I had known the Earl all my life, and he spoke to me just as freely and as angrily as Mr. Will might have done, if anything had chanced to put him in a passion.

Careless about his papers as about all his other concerns, my master had tossed the doctor's letter on his table, and left it there; and as I knew he had no secrets from anybody, I gave it to the Earl to read. It was written in some foreign language, and his Lordship had trouble to make it out; but he managed to do so at last, and then, throwing it down, broke forth again—What was the meaning of their not sending to him?

'The letter may have gone astray, my Lord,' I ventured to suggest, and my words fell like oil on troubled waters.

It might—it had; here was the solution of the enigma. Of course his mother would send for him. Thus the Earl ran on, ending by saying I was an honest fellow and attached to the family.

The mercury of his temper fell as rapidly as it had risen. His voice resumed its usual tone; his brow cleared; he threw himself

into an easy chair, and allowed me to get him some refreshment. He praised the vintages loved by the departed Smythe-Johnes, talked to me about Mr. Will and my new mistress, spoke of his own sons, and, in a word, was as pleasant as any gentleman could be. There were some letters for his nephew and for his nephew's wife; and when I mentioned this fact, he 'graciously,' to quote Mrs. Barrett, offered to take charge of them. Indeed, the whole establishment seemed oppressed by the weight of the honour done to it, and appeared satisfied that Miss Johnes had made an exceedingly good investment when she married Mr. Will.

I was treated also with more deference after the Earl's visit, and my fellow servants asked me such lots of questions about the Dugdales and Patterings, about Oakhill, and my Lord's house in town, and the Dowager's place in the country, that I grew sick and tired of the very name of my master's family.

'After all,' I thought one morning, 'if our old life was anxious, we had variety, at any rate. I do not believe I can stand this much longer.'

An interruption was coming to the monotony for which I was little prepared; it came very soon indeed.

That same evening, I was walking down the elm avenue which people came from far and near to see, when I met two well-dressed men, who proceeded quietly on without taking the least notice of me. I could not tell what made me do it, but when they had traversed some twenty yards, I turned and followed. By the time they reached the house I was close behind them. The hall-door stood open, and on the threshold was Catteron, one of the footmen, lazily

contemplating the landscape. To him the strangers addressed themselves.

'Is Mr. Patteringham within?' asked the elder and stouter of the two.

'No; he is not at home.'

'When do you expect him back?'

'Can't say; he is gone abroad. The Dowager Countess of Dugdale is ill, and sent for him.' Catteron added this piece of information, not out of any civility towards the strangers, whom, indeed, he had treated with scant courtesy, but because he never willingly missed an opportunity of speaking of the Dugdales or their titles. There was a pause—the men, who did not look like gentlemen, though they were well dressed, exchanged glances, then the elder one inquired—

'Is Mr. Patteringham's servant, Walters, here, or has he gone abroad too?'

'No; he is standing behind you;' and thus indicated, I came forward.

'I would like a minute's private conversation with you, sir,' said the spokesman, and seeing that Catteron would not go, and that the stranger would not speak before him, I opened the door of a small cloak-room, and followed the visitor in.

Directly I had done so he closed the door, and said confidentially—

'This is a mighty disagreeable business, Walters. Had Mr. Patteringham been at home I feel no doubt the matter might have been settled in two minutes; but as it is, I must leave a man here—yes, I must.'

'You don't mean to say——' I gasped.

'Yes, I do,' he interrupted. 'Most of his debts were arranged, no doubt; but this one, at any

rate, does not seem to have been settled. No doubt the man felt hurt at being left out in the cold. Anyway, he is very bitter, and so I'm here; and being here, I must leave a man.'

I certainly was no innocent in such matters. I had seen as many writs and witnessed as many arrests as most men who were not sheriffs' officers; and yet the simplest and most timid woman could not have felt more frightened than did I at sight of the writ he handed to me.

The horror of such a thing happening in that house as a man being left in possession, was more than I could bear. Mrs. Barrett—the servants—what should I say to them—what explanation could I give?

'We might leave the place and the country, Mr. Will and I, after such a disgrace had befallen us; that was what I thought as the stranger pushed me, trembling in every limb, into a seat.

'Let us talk it over, and see what can be done,' he said, not unkindly. 'Mr. Haman told me to ask to see you, if Mr. Pattingham chanced to be out. He knew your master would not mind standing a trifle to keep the matter quiet.'

'You are from Haman, then,' I murmured. Accursed had that name been always in my ears, doubly accursed was it now.

'Yes, and I'll make it straight with him, so as to give you time to get the debt paid. It would have a bad look to seize here; and your master so lately married, too. You had better represent that your master promised to find my man a berth—that he did Mr. Pattingham a service once. (I groaned aloud.) Come, come, you were man enough in London; don't pull a long face now.'

Well, the upshot of it was, that

he went away and his man stayed.

'Look here,' said the latter—as if I was not looking at him—'I'll make things pleasant for you as far as I can. When Mr. Pattingham comes back, you can say a word in my favour, and I am sure, by what I have heard of him, he won't forget I tried to perform a disagreeable duty agreeably. Haman gave me a hint of how the land might lie, and I am not a fool.'

That he certainly was not. Before three days were over, he was the life of the servants' hall. He won Mrs. Barrett's heart by giving her a specific for corns, and he made love indiscriminately to the housemaids and the cook. They were all expecting him to propose, and I, miserable I, knowing all, had to look on and laugh with the rest.

When I returned one day from the nearest village, Catteron said a young gentleman 'was waiting to see Mr. Walters.'

'Pears to me you have more visitors than Mr. Pattingham himself,' remarked Catteron, with a sniff. How it happened I could not tell; but in precise proportion as Mr. Sanders grew in favour, I lost it.

I went into the library where the young gentleman sat.

'Mr. Thomas Walters?' he said.

'At your service, sir,' I answered.

'I have brought Mrs. Pattingham's diamonds; and as my instructions were, in her absence, to deliver them to no one but you, I have waited for your return.'

'But,' I expostulated, 'how does it happen they are sent down here? I understood Mr. Pattingham, they were to remain at Messrs. Bundell and Bridge's.'

'I know nothing about that,' he answered. 'My principals had an order to deliver them here, and I have brought them. Be kind enough to sign your name there,'

and he pushed a paper towards me.

I never told any one, except Mrs. Barrett, those diamonds had come; they were a weight on my mind.

I slept with the diamonds, and I dreamt of them; what a trouble I had no one suspected; no one, unless it might be Mrs. Barrett and Mr. Sanders.

'If I were in your place, Thomas,' said the former to me, 'I would take the plate and the diamonds over to the bank at Lantree to-morrow.'

'I'll take the diamonds, at any rate,' I answered, groaning inwardly over Mrs. Barrett's want of comprehension.

'If she only knew there was a bailiff in the house it would be a comfort,' I considered.

The whole affair was growing too much for me, however; I confessed as much to Mr. Charles Sanders, who was kind and sympathetic, as usual.

'I should not sit up late, old fellow, if I were you to-night; go to bed early, and you will find yourself another man to-morrow.'

Which advice I followed. After only one tumbler of punch, I locked myself in my pantry, where I had latterly slept, resolving that early the next morning I would take my Lady's diamonds to the bank at Lantree.

So great a relief was this resolve to my mind, that I fell into a dreamless sleep, from which I was awakened by a noise as of some one trying my door; then it, the door I had locked, opened, and my friend Mr. Sanders appeared, carrying a lantern cautiously.

'What, Walters, still awake?' he said; then, before I could answer, there came a crashing blow. When I came to myself, the sun was streaming across the pantry, and

I could see the strong-room had been broken into and its contents ransacked.

With a groan, I dragged my body into the passage, where, a few hours afterwards, Catteron found me.

For days and weeks I lay between life and death, and when I recovered, it was to hear from Mr. Will that his grandmother had never been ill; that the whole matter was a preconcerted scheme; that all his debts had been arranged before his marriage; that Mr. Charles Sanders was no bailiff, only a remarkably clever thief, whom the law hoped eventually to catch and punish.

Anything more? Well, yes. Her Ladyship, Mrs. Pattingham, would not believe in my innocence; and, for the sake of peace, I must go.

'Of course I will do all for you I can. This makes no difference to me, Tom?' my master said, but I turned my head away, sick at heart, wounded to the very quick.

'I might be wrong,'—so I stated in a note I left for Mr. Will, when I was strong enough to leave Johnesborough,—'but I would never knowingly see him again till the diamonds were found.'

It seemed a wild-goose chase then, but I got upon the track of them at last.

There is a story hanging to the finding of the diamonds, too long to tell now. Suffice it to say, they were found, though not in time for my Lady to appear in them at Court.

But she was a just woman, and acknowledged her mistake, and did right by me at last; and so I am fain to confess, gentlemen, that the Countess of Dugdale is a brave and stately lady, and that she has made Mr. Will a good wife, and that they both installed me landlord of the 'Dugdale Arms.'





*Drawn by R. Caldecott.*

A HUNTFAST.





HUNTFAST.

## THE YACHT 'BANSHEE.'

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

### I.

#### HOW I CAME TO BUY THE 'BANSHEE.'

AT one time of my life I was in very low spirits at the loss of a near and dear relation; and this feeling soon deepened into a sort of depression, which it was impossible to shake off. Though I was what is called 'a writing man,' and working morning, noon, and night, with an enthusiasm that made other occupations an enjoyment, still, the accustomed duties had now become as odious as the thirty lines of Virgil the schoolboy must get by heart before being allowed out to fly his kite. A friendly physician—Sir Duncan Dennison, who had studied thoroughly all the mental ills that the brains of studious men are not merely heirs to, but actually enjoy in strict settlement, such as 'breaking down,' 'breaking up,' or, what is more fatal still, 'overdoing it'—said, in his blunt way, that there were but two alternatives—going abroad, or going to Colney Hatch. 'Clear your head of Isabella and Lord Robert, forswear pothooks and hangers for three months at least, or'—he added mysteriously—'you may be found one morning using a pothook or hanger in a way very alarming to your friends. Let's see. Go to Homburg, Baden, Switzerland.'

'Been there,' I said, 'for a dozen years in succession.'

'Well, do you like the sea?'

'I used to, when I was a boy. Once on a time I used to row.'

'The very thing. Get a yacht! Go away—get into storms—run

into danger: be well browned and scorched. You will come back quite boisterous. The very thing!'

It was the very thing. I would get a yacht, and revive my old taste, which had been lying dormant for some twenty years, like my skill at marbles or hand-ball, which I am convinced a day or two's practice would restore. I was delighted at the idea; a faint enthusiasm was kindling within me. The recollections of breezy days; the boat lying down until the rail was under water; the peculiar gurgle or rushing sound of the waves; the independence;—all these things began to come back on me. There might still be a zest found in life, independent of the pothooks and hangers.

The first object was to secure a boat, and to this end I waited on various agents. The first, the Grand Yachting Company, professed to have five hundred twenty-ton cutters, three hundred thirty-ton, two hundred forty-ton, and one hundred schooners of every class and tonnage. I felt certain that I must suit myself at an establishment doing such vast business, and enjoying the confidence of such a varied scale of yachting interests; and that it must be difficult indeed if I could not provide myself in such a fleet. I was asked for a precise statement of my wants; and, to my surprise, found that there were, at most, but three or four vessels that were at all likely to answer to these

requirements. I tried other establishments, and found that where the prices suited the boat did not, and that where the boat suited the price did not. All agreed that to get what would exactly 'suit me' was a question of time; all agreed that in a month or so whole fleets would be coming in to be laid up, and that then would be my opportunity. Yachts, I have since discovered, are very like horses—hard to sell, and yet, stranger to say, harder to buy. All the agents brightened and became enthusiastic when a delay was mentioned, and almost scoffed at the notion of the proper craft not being forthcoming.

One morning—it was at the end of September—I received a letter with a black-edged envelope. It ran—

'SIR,—I understand you want a yacht.

'I have got one to sell.

'She is a new boat, cost a deal of money, is fitted handsomely, and will take you anywhere.

'A low price is asked.

'If you come down to Southampton, any day you choose to appoint, I shall show her to you.

'I wish to part with her at once. She is fitted out, having just returned from a voyage.

'Her name, the "BANSHEE."

'I remain,

'Yours sincerely,

'STEPHEN BLACKWOOD.'

I felt that this was a proper business-like man to deal with. There was nothing about him corresponding to the three hundred ton, &c., though there was a bluntness in his style that was almost surly. I started the very next day, and found him at the hotel whence his letter was dated.

He was a tall, black-haired, barrister-faced man, very hard in

the features; one who, with suitable clothes and due amount of scrubbiness, would have had the true money-lending air. He was too genteel, however, for that, and was dressed in the best style. There was not the least nautical flavour about him, which was odd. A tall, Italian-looking woman was sitting with him, whose full, dark eyes expanded as they rested on me.

'Mrs. Blackwood,' he said, as she rose to leave the room. 'Now to business. What do you think of the boat? Does she suit you?'

'I have not seen her.'

'Not seen her? Then we are only wasting time talking. Suppose you go and see her, and return here? She lies in the outer dock; not ten minutes' walk from this place.'

There was something in this style I did not quite relish; but, as it was to be a matter of business, I did not mind. I went straight to the docks, and saw the 'Banshee' lying out in the middle of the basin. There was an indescribable, solemn look about her—a solitary air, as she lay there, which struck me at the very first glance. Her hull was dark, and seemed to rest on the water in a dull, brooding fashion.

'Coffin-built, summut like,' said a voice beside me; 'but the best work is in her. No money was spared on her. Like to go aboard, sir?'

We went on board. The praise given was not too much. She was a beautifully-finished boat; her decks as smooth as a ball-room floor; brass-work, skylights, 'sticks,' spars, running-rigging, standing ditto—everything perfect, and everything handsome.

I went below. At the foot of the stair, to the right and left, were the saloon and ladies' cabin. The former seemed to me singu-

larly gloomy, and somewhat like a dark study in an old house; but this, I found, was the effect of the sombre wood of which the fittings were made, and which I took to be ebony. This effect was the more curious, as the ladies' cabin was bright with the gayest chintz and pretty hangings, and the light shaded off by pink-lined muslin. The whole, indeed, was exactly the thing for me, save in one respect—the price. Such a craft could not be had under some six or seven hundred pounds, which was much beyond what I could compass.

I returned.

'Well, you have seen the "Banshee,"' he said. 'Do you like her?—and will you take her?'

'I like her, certainly; though there is rather a gloomy, sepulchral look about her—'

His brow darkened. 'What do you mean?' he said, sharply. 'If you admit this sort of fancies, we had better stop here. My time, and probably yours, is too valuable to be wasted.'

'It was one of the sailors,' I said, carelessly, 'who made the remark. His words were, that she was "coffin-like."'

He started up angrily. 'This ends the matter. I decline to sell my boat to you, sir. I must say it is hardly polite of a mere stranger to make such remarks to the owner. I shall *not* sell her.'

'Good,' I said; 'in any case I fear we should not have come to terms. You give me your opinion of myself with great frankness. I may then tell you that you are too sensitive a vendor for me.'

He looked at me, and laughed. 'I am fretted sometimes. You don't know the bother I have had with this boat. As to her cut and air, I can't help it. Possibly the builder was a gloomy one, or— But come to business. Will you

take her for six hundred pounds? Take it or leave it at that price.'

This was less than I had expected, but more than I could manage.

'It is much below its value,' I answered; 'but the truth is, I can't go to such prices. So I must leave it.'

'Why, what do you want?' he said; 'not surely one of those twenty-year old tubs which you can pick up for forty or fifty pounds, and on which you have to lay out a couple of hundred before you can take an hour's sailing. Here,' he said, giving his desk a blow with his fist, 'take her. Take her at five hundred—four hundred. God bless my soul, can't you manage that? Why—'

'I take her,' I said; and the 'Banshee' was mine.

## II.

### WHAT I SAW IN THE 'BANSHEE.'

After my purchase of the 'Banshee,' I felt rather depressed than elated. I went to look for the man in charge of her.

'So you've bought her,' he said. 'Well, you've made a good thing of it. There isn't a better boat afloat.'

'But why was he so anxious to be rid of her?'

The man looked at me steadily. 'Why?' he said; 'ah! that's it. She didn't suit him, I s'pose. Nor more than she may suit you; nor no more than she may the gent to whom you sell her at the end of the season.'

'But he seemed such a strange man,' I said.

'That's it again,' he said; 'strange men will have strange boats. Not that there is a word to be said again *her*. She's worth double the money.'

The next duty was to find three men and a boy to work the 'Banshee.' That was done in half an hour. There was really nothing to be done to the boat; she was ready for sea; and it was arranged that we should start in the morning.

I had just done dinner at the hotel, when word was brought up that 'Ned Bowden,' the skipper of the boat, wished to speak with me. He was in some confusion.

'Sorry, sir, to put a gentleman to inconvenience; but the fact is I and my mates don't wish to sarve. We'd be obliged to you to let us off.'

'Let you off?' I said. 'What's the meaning of this?'

'It looks unhandsome, I know, sir; but it can't be done; and we'd rather not. You see, we've been afloat a long time, and it's takin' men rather short not to let them have a holiday on dry land 'tween vy'ges. And so—sir—'

'I wouldn't keep men,' I said, 'on any terms, who would think of behaving as you have done. There are plenty of as good men to be got. You may go.'

'Thank you; thank you, sir,' said the man, much relieved. 'Don't think hardly of us, for we are more or less druv to it.'

'Exactly,' I said; 'I am at least entitled to know your reasons for such a scandalous desertion.'

He shook his head solemnly. 'Why, there's why's, and why's, you know, sir; and some why's concerns one man, and some another. The boat's a good one, and will take you anywhere and allwheres. And I've nothing against your honour.'

'You may go,' I said.

This was not auspicious as a commencement. But it was to cause no inconvenience; for a handsome Cowes yacht came in

that very night to lay up, and three smart men, and a smarter boy, volunteered on the spot. There was a pleasant breeze blowing, so we determined to get away in the morning.

With that commenced a new and most delightful life. The first day alone showed me what a charming mode of existence yachting was; and I foresaw that very soon, by this agreeable process, I should be quite restored to health and rational enjoyment of life. There was a surprising exhilaration in that fresh, open sea. The blue, salty waves were at their rude gambols, like lions in their more amiable moments. The fresh, piquant air brought back appetite, and seemed to give new strength. The effect, in these small boats, is as though one were standing on a plank in the middle of the ocean, the waves being but a few inches from your feet. You are not, as in the greater vessels, screened off, as it were, from the direct touch of the waves and the breezes that sweep keenly over the surface of the waves. The day seemed to fly by too quickly; and when, about seven o'clock, we dropped anchor in a little harbour, I felt quite in good humour with the 'Banshee,' and could have patted it, as one would a faithful dog.

The boat was brought round to take me ashore, for I was going to dine at an hotel. As I was 'pulled' away by four stout arms, I looked back at my new craft, and was struck by the same curious, dark, sullen look of her hull, and the inky blackness of her rigging against the sky. It gave me the idea of something coiled up—something solemn—and had not the gay, airy look we associate with a yacht. I stepped ashore, and bidding the men be steady and careful, and not neglect their duties, I went to the hotel

and dined. After dinner I sauntered along the pier—always a pleasant and romantic entertainment for one given to ruminating—and then hailed the yacht. In a few moments I heard the faint splash of the oars, and presently could make out the dark outline of the boat as it drew near. It was pulled by the smart boy, as the men were ashore, and it was not yet time for them to return.

I sat upon deck, smoking and looking round at the lights twinkling at the bows of many vessels around me, at the glare of the lighthouse—always a picturesque object—at the amphitheatre of lines of yellow light, that rose in semi-circles on shore, giving the idea of cardboard pricked with a pin. I was sitting on a little camp-stool close to the skylight, when I absently looked through the glass into the cabin, which was lit up, and, to my amazement, saw—yes, saw a woman lying asleep, as it seemed to me, on one of the sofas.

I was almost speechless with indignation. These were the new, steady men, who had brought such characters from their last employer. Here was the wife or sweetheart of one of these fellows; and I remembered now how anxious they had been that I should stop at this place, which they knew well. Much put out—for at this time I had grown nervous and irritable—I called the boy.

'Where is Pile and the others?' ('Jim Pile' was the name of the skipper.)

'At the "Blue Jacket," sir, on the pier.'

'Get the boat.'

I was pulled ashore again, fuming. The 'Blue Jacket' was exactly opposite the landing-stairs. I sent in for the men.

'I want you on board at once,' I said. 'I am greatly displeased.'

'Sorry, sir,' said Jim Pile, who

had an off-hand way with him. 'What have we done agin rule, sir?'

'I'll tell you when we are on deck.'

They rowed away silently. When we were on deck I said to them, in rather a fretful way,

'I tell you this will not do. I have been ordered quiet. If I have only got a yacht to be exposed to this sort of worry, I had better go back at once. It is intolerable.'

'What have we done agin the rules, sir?' again asked Jim Pile.

'Look down there. Who has dared to do this?'

I looked down myself, as they did. The woman had gone. She had got away in some boat of the harbour.

'Very clever,' I went on. 'But I shall be a match for these tricks another time. And now take this warning from me. If it happens again, or anything like it, you will leave me on the instant.'

'God bless us, sir!' said Jim Pile, with some impatience, 'what have the men done? If it were only having a glass at the "Blue Jacket"'

'Leave it so,' I said. 'I am content to pass it over for this time. That will do. Go forward now.'

They went away, with a bewildered air. It was very cunning of the woman to have got away so quickly. However, we were to sail in the morning, and the wife, or sweetheart, or whatever she was, would find herself, in vulgar parlance, 'sold.'

### III.

#### THE STORM.

We sailed along all the next day; and a pretty stiff breeze getting up, the 'Banshee' began to show that she was an excellent sea-boat. We



were all satisfied with her, and she was pronounced 'to get along like a spanker'—high nautical praise. During the day I was sitting below in the saloon—an apartment which I could not relish, it was so depressing from its gloom and melancholy. To amuse myself I called in the boy, and we both began to set things in order, clearing out old lockers, which we found filled with empty bottles and the usual odds and ends which accumulate in a yacht. There were empty match-boxes, old pipes, account-books, and a number of torn-up papers, and an old letter or two, also torn up.

Some words on a fragment of these caught my eye. They were: 'I will not trust myself to you alone. You know I am in terror of my life of you. I believe if you got me on board with you, I should not get ashore alive.'

These were strange words, and I pored over them long. To them was assuredly attached some history, but too intelligible, associated with the owner or with one of his guests. The owner, to a certainty; it could be all read in his rough bearing, and, what I was certain of, his almost infernal temper, which, with me, could scarcely be kept within bounds. But then the lady who was with him had scarcely the air of being in 'terror of her life.' She was, indeed, rather confident; and it might be suspected that within her eyes was lurking a devil as violent as his. I speculated long over this.

We were now coasting, and the enchantment of this mode of life began to grow more and more on me. It seemed the highest form of *lotos-eating*. There was an entertainment in seeing the shore unwind slowly, as though it were a diorama, new and newer objects coming on in front, as others disappeared behind. That headland

had such a name—that village was so called—and *there* was the light. The entering a little port, with its small harbour, lighthouse, and tiny amphitheatre of houses, is like the discovery of a new country.

That day wore on, and evening began to close. We saw the light of the port we intended to stop at twinkling afar off. By ten o'clock we had dropped anchor. Jim Pile and his men came for leave to go ashore, which was granted, with a wholesome caution. I could not help asking the question, had they any friends or relations at this place. They declared that not one of them had been there before. Good. Then they must be sober, steady, and be back before twelve o'clock.

I was not going ashore myself, but remained on deck, looking on at that pretty night scene. It was a fishing port. The lights were twinkling on shore, and twinkling the more as seen through the dark rigging of the fishing-boats, huddled together as fishing-boats always are. The hours passed away—it came to eleven—to half-past—and then I heard the slow plash of oars. The men were returning punctually. As I stood up to take a few paces up and down—for it had grown chilly—I glanced carelessly down through the skylight, and—thought I saw something—some one below. I looked again. Yes there was a woman lying on the sofa. I looked at her steadily, so that I should know her again. She was asleep, and was in a white dress, with a heavy Indian shawl wrapped up about her.

The men were now alongside. For the moment I did not think of the improbability of their having brought a person thus dressed on board; but as soon as they were on deck I said to Jim Pile:

'You seemed to think I was unjust in reprimanding you all

yesterday. Come down with me to the cabin. Look there,' I added as I entered.

The woman was gone! I passed hurriedly through the fore-castle; tried the ladies' cabin—the pantry—the skipper's. She was not there—not in the vessel at all.

Then it all flashed upon me. I felt a cold, creeping chill coming over me, and caught at the table for support.

Jim Pile and the men were at the door waiting, and wondering. I had presence of mind to falter out a clumsy excuse: 'I had thought that they had not "settled up" the place. I wasn't very well that night. Let all go on deck at once.' They went away. Jim Pile with curious, wondering looks.

When they were gone, the cabin had quite another aspect. Each little door seemed as though it was about to open—as though there was something behind it which would issue forth.

I shrank in terror from the place and hurried on deck. It was a fresh and clear night, with a strong breeze blowing. I called Jim Pile aft.

'We must go on to-night,' I said; 'I dare not stay in a place like this.'

'It looks dirty,' he said, glancing at the sky; 'we are snug enough where we are.'

'I must go on to-night,' I said. 'I suppose you don't want me to sit up here on deck all night.'

This strange speech was more directed to my own thoughts, for I knew that I dared not go down to the cabin, and I was ashamed to go ashore again.

The men were a little sulky at this sudden change. The main-sail was hauled up, the anchor raised, and we stood out for sea. I stood there long, and then taking a sudden resolution, went down-stairs again into the cabin.

A sigh of relief as I saw that the lonely room was vacant; yet I fancied that the cushions of the sofa showed a dent, as though some one had just been leaning on them.

An overpowering desire had taken possession of me. I must search—search carefully and earnestly—for I had conviction that something connected with it would be found.

I turned up the leather cushions hastily, and dragged up the lid of the locker underneath. There was nothing but old boxes, and such *débris* as I had found there before. I made this search fearfully, looking round as though I expected that each quivering shadow behind me would presently take shape as that ghostly figure.

As I replaced the board, and the cushion on the board, I saw something, buried, as it were, in the corner of the sofa. I drew it out: it was black, and squeezed up like a pocket-handkerchief. It was stiff and dried, and in spreading it I saw that it was a little black lace and straw lady's hat, which had evidently been saturated with sea-water, and had grown dry in that corner. I was not usually an observer of trifles, points of female dress and the like, but it seemed familiar, and to be exactly the same as I had seen with the reclining figure.

#### IV.

##### HOW I DISPOSED OF THE 'BANSHEE.'

Meanwhile the 'Banshee' had begun to creak and strain, and even plunge. I could hear the wind whistling, the noise of the waves, and the cries of the sailors calling to one another. I came upon deck. The great mainsail was being got down, and was flapping and tumbling on the

deck like some huge sea-monster that had been dragged on board. A man was aloft 'freeing' the high topmast, which was being struck to 'make her snug,' and the trysail was lying ready 'bent,' presently to be hoisted up. These were ominous signs, and Jim Pile, as he came by me, said in a low voice, 'That he wished we were back in port again.'

That night was to be well known in the dismal annals of coast casualties. The winds whistled; the waves rose to the height of great hills; the 'Banshee' was flung and tossed about like a cork. Great seas came and broke over us, sweeping our little deck, that seemed no bigger than a small tray, from end to end. What with the joint roaring of the winds and sea, I had never known such a terrible scene of chaos before; yet, still it had not such terrors for me as what I had seen below.

It was very dark. There was no moon or stars, and yet the white and grey of the waves furnished a sort of dull, leaden light, that came and went. Just as we rose on one tremendous wave, I chanced to glance down through the skylight, and then, once more I caught a glimpse of the ghostly figure reclining on the sofa. I had not time to look, for the sea came, and struck us violently, submerging us all, ship and men.

I caught at the shrouds, and thought at the moment that it was all over; but as the boat righted, I distinctly saw, in that confusion, a white figure emerge from the deck, stand beside me a moment, and then be swept from the deck into the boiling waters with a loud cry!

The following day the 'Banshee,' all torn and bruised, was lying in a small harbour, which she had reached providentially. I went

ashore, and took the railway to Southampton, which I reached that very night. I there made certain inquiries about Mr. Stephen Blackwood, and after a day or two, learned that he had married a young wife, with whom he had expected to receive a great deal of money, but had been disappointed owing to the failure of her father, who had been a merchant. They had not lived very happily together, especially since he had made the acquaintance of the French lady, to whom he was now married.

He had been passionately fond of yachting, and used to force his wife to go with him on his first voyages. But he was once caught in a storm off the coast of France, and a sea had swept her overboard. At least, she had been seen standing beside him during the gale, though the men had warned him that she ought to go below; and in a moment or two she was gone.

With some scruples I offered the 'Banshee' for sale, meaning, however, to act the part of an honest vendor, and trusting to find some careless purchaser who would laugh at such scruples. But, strange to say, I cannot find a buyer of any sort. The 'Banshee' was for sale, and is still for sale. So that if any of our nautical readers should—

I ought to mention, at the close of this narrative, that no one 'pooh-poohed' the whole so much as my friendly physician, Sir Duncan. He said, and says still, it was all morbid; that I had been overworked at the time—the nerves unstrung—and that, probably, the late owner was a decent, respectable man, as innocent as any of those children unborn, whose future interests Sir Duncan often took care of.

## CARDS OF INVITATION,

BY THOSE WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THEM.

## I.—A RECEPTION AT THE WAR OFFICE.

I HAD just returned from the autumn campaign, and my man was busy with my uniform, as I lounged, garbed in a welcome suit of mufti, in an easy-chair in St. James's Street. The looking-glass had told me that my complexion was to be a thing of the past for at least some months to come, and my tailor had found a marked difference in the size of my coats—they had grown too large for me. Yes, I had certainly undergone a very trying ordeal. Those who slumber in club reading-rooms and travel first-class on Swiss railways (the latter luxury, by-the-way, is a great mistake; the cloth coverings of the 'seconde' are much to be preferred to the velvet of the 'première') know but little of the miseries of those 'told off' for duty in a flying column. Awakened from one's slumbers at the hour usually devoted to the last rubber but four, to tumble off a rickety bed on to a waterproof sheet, and then and there to tub in a pail filled with ditch-water, is anything but pleasant. A meal of half-cooked mutton, eaten whilst dressing, is anything but digestible; and a march of thirty miles before 'mess' (the name exactly denotes the character of the banquet) can scarcely be described with veracity as a 'constitutional.' But there, the miserable month was over. I could afford to smile at the forty pounds of personal property allowed me by the regulations. Once I had prized the articles amounting to that weight very dearly, in spite of their

homeliness; but now they were merely a collection of tins, plates, pewter flagons, and india-rubber basins—nothing more. I sat smoking my cigar in silence, with visions of a little dissipation in town, and a good deal of shooting in the country, before my eyes. My man continued his brushing and folding, and I was gradually falling into a gentle slumber, when the sharp knock of a passing postman recalled me from the land of dreams.

'A letter, sir,' said John, with military brevity. It *was* a letter—but such a letter! Had the envelope contained a death-warrant I should not have been surprised. Six inches square, at the very least, official paper, and with a pink edition of the royal arms serving as a seal. What did it mean? Had the authorities discovered at last that I had regulated the amount of my baggage during the manœuvres, after having accepted the matter as a fact that the large drawing-room grand piano weighed only six pounds and a half? Had my Colonel sent in a 'confidential' report, complaining of my refusal to dance at county balls? I pondered in deep thought for a moment and then broke the seal. I breathed again as I found that it was merely a letter of invitation from 'Mr. Secretary Cardwell,' requesting me to honour a banquet at the War Office on the 13th of September, 1872, with my presence, 'to meet His Royal Highness the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief.' In spite

of its civil wording, the document looked very much like an order. The allusion to the presence of that most popular of martinets, 'George, Ranger,' was quite enough to overawe a wearer of scarlet and gold. So, with something like a sigh—for I hate official festivity—I sat down before my desk and penned an humble letter of acceptance to the card of invitation.

As a rule, the War Office is not a very lively place. There is something particularly mournful in the aspect of the courtyard, with its solitary sentry and depressing monument to Sydney Herbert, as viewed from the second window of the 'Rag.' Until the officer commanding-in-chief shifted his head-quarters from Whitehall to Pall Mall, it was quite the thing to hate the houses on 'the other side of the way.' The establishment was regarded as the manufactory of red tape, and the birthplace of that bugbear of soldiers, the system of 'control.' It was believed that in the dismal rooms of 'Subdivision Z' was the great question of coats discussed, and the rows with the Indian Office organized. It is the birthright of a professional man to abuse something, and the War Office was of yore the target for the military sharpshooters. 'Over the way' was accountable for everything objectionable to the officer and injudicious for the private. The abolition of purchase, the changes of uniform, the thousand and one grievances of which the soldier had to complain, were all attributed to the blundering of the heads of that most unpopular department. When 'the Duke,' attended by his staff, seized a portion of the establishment there was a revulsion of feeling to a certain extent. Pall Mall began to be

tolerable, and men with short whiskers and small moustaches were seen occasionally entering the door nearest to the Carlton Club. Still, people were rather ashamed of the place. The two sentries posted at the portals seemed to be uneasy, and looked as if the Mutiny Act alone prevented them from beating a retreat into the area. Moreover, his Royal Highness refused to change the name of his ancient abode, and still called his office 'The Horse Guards,' thus administering a decided snub to the mansions of Pall Mall. Under these circumstances, I felt that when I accepted 'Mr. Secretary's' invitation I was, to a certain extent, pledging myself to venture into the lion's den.

I had some slight personal knowledge of the War Office. A cousin of mine had entered the place during the Crimean campaign; and in paying him an occasional visit I had discovered that the hall was draughty, and contained a marble bust of the first Duke of Wellington, and that the strangers' room was dull, and possessed two large oil paintings of the 'Judgment of Solomon' and 'Covent Garden Market in the Olden Time.'

'Where did you get those valuable objects of art from?' I asked, on the occasion of one of my periodical calls.

'I am sure I don't know,' he replied, putting his glass up to his eye, and looking at them vacantly; 'I rather think they were left to the nation by somebody or other. They have been here as long as I can remember, and here they will remain until we discover a precedent that will enable us to deal with them.'

'Might send the Solomon picture to the National Portrait Gallery, to keep company with

Brown, of the reign of Charles the Second, and Smith, of the time of George the First,' I suggested.

'That would never do. No one would dare to act upon his own responsibility. Did you notice the sentry at the gate of the courtyard as you came in?'

'To be sure I did.'

'Do you know how he came to be stationed there?'

'No,' I confessed.

'Well, it is said that a drunken soldier, who had been discharged, visited the office one Monday morning, some twenty years ago. The man forced himself into the presence of the Secretary, and had to be removed by a policeman, aided by a sentry taken from the Palace hard by. The services of the sentry were called into requisition because only one policeman could be found, and one policeman was proved unequal to the task of ejecting the unwelcome visitor. The officer commanding the Palace guard suggested that a soldier should remain on duty in the War Office in case of a return of the brawler. This offer was accepted, and the soldier was changed every two hours by a successor being posted in his place at the end of every period. This arrangement continued through Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, until the end of the week. It was not dropped on the Sunday, and has been in force ever since!'

'What, for twenty years?'

'Yes—night and day, for twenty years.'

My cousin seemed to believe the story; and although I have my own doubts about its genuineness, I cannot deny that the tale is not only possible but probable. I, myself, can vouch for having seen the model of a sea-battery in the centre of the hall for years. It has disappeared now—I wonder where it has gone to—perhaps

(after having been refused at home) to Russia. I had more than once visited other parts of the War Office, and had come away with the idea that the place consisted of extremes. It reminded me very strongly of Regent Street and Soho. Now I was in a room with a painted ceiling and a gorgeously decorated wall—now in a squalid cupboard that was better suited to dogs than to men. Long passages and mysterious corridors—here and there a glass case containing a sleepy messenger or a weary commissionaire. At lunch-time, a general atmosphere of roast mutton; at other hours, a smell of leather and old pay lists. There, that was about my notion of the War Office on days of relaxation; I mean, when the place was given over to Mr. Cardwell and his employés. The establishment certainly looked brighter when I visited it on the 13th of last September.

Of course, uniform was *de rigueur*. This being the case, I assumed my tunic and those easily tarnished gold belts which are only worn (see the regulation) at *levées*, balls, and other 'entertainments.' As I entered the brightly-illuminated hall, I was surprised to find the apartment a mass, not of red tape, but of red cloth. The floor was covered with red cloth, the walls were festooned with red cloth, and red cloth appeared again on the ceiling. In fact, the rule seemed to have been, 'when in doubt, hang up a good deal of scarlet.' I felt, for the moment, that I was about to 'assist' at a very gorgeous execution. This rather unpleasant sensation soon passed away, as I met on every side the cheerful faces of gaily garbed friends and acquaintances. I was ushered up the really fine staircase and conducted into the apartment usually sacred to pri-



vate secretaries and their visitors, now converted for the nonce into an ante-room. There were a large number of the invited waiting the arrival of the guests of the evening. I may mention here that Mr. Secretary Cardwell had provided three saloons for the use of the diners. We smoked in the ante-room after the banquet, fed in the council-chamber, and the third apartment was reserved for the use of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge. As a matter of fact, the third saloon was never entered by any one; as their Royal Highnesses, with the proverbial geniality of English officers, preferred to mix with the company in the ante-room to smoking a couple of cigars *tête-à-tête*. By-and-by the strains of 'God save the Queen' announced the fact that the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, and 'The Prince,' had put in an appearance. Without further ceremony, a move was made to the door, and we soon found ourselves in the presence of royalty and the banquet.

The Secretary of State's room at the War Office is a splendid place. It contains six large windows, from which may be seen (in the daytime) the garden of Marlborough House, and a part of the Prince's stables. The ceiling of this very lofty apartment is beautifully decorated with pictures of Venus rather than of Mars, and the walls are bright with trophies of arms, in which the spears of lances have the preference. It once served as the dining-room of the Duke of Cumberland, so unpleasantly remembered from his Culloden exploits as 'the Royal Butcher;' and many are the stories that are told of the room and its late owner. If I did not fear to weary my readers, I might fill pages and

pages of 'London Society' with these nearly-forgotten tales. As I stood near the horseshoe table, covered with costly plate and surrounded by the wearers of gorgeous uniforms, I could not help recalling an anecdote, the relation of which may not be out of place in this sketchy little article. Its brevity must serve as a recommendation. More than a hundred years ago a dinner-party was given in this very room, of which the Duke was the host, and several of his friends were the guests. Amongst those honoured with an invitation was a poor old officer, who had been asked, it is said, for the purpose of serving as a jest to the more wealthy diners. During the banquet, this poor old officer, who held no higher rank than lieutenant, was silent and depressed. The joke was a failure, and he was soon forgotten. After dinner, a foreign decoration was passed round the table by the Duke of Cumberland for inspection, and was handed in due course to the lieutenant. Before the party separated, his Royal Highness discovered that the star had not been returned to him. He asked for it, and it could nowhere be found. With gentlemanly consideration he requested his guests to turn out their pockets before him. His command met with but one refusal—the lieutenant declined to obey him, and left the presence, branded as a thief. The next morning the decoration was discovered under the table by one of the servants, and was handed to the Duke. His Royal Highness immediately commanded the lieutenant to appear before him; and then, under some pressure, the old officer confessed that he would not turn out his pockets the night before because they contained food that he had secreted for the

use of his sick wife and starving children. And at this point my story ends. I know not what became of the poor fellow, the hero of my tale; but, from the character of the Duke of Cumberland, I fear that promotion (at least, in the case of the old lieutenant) was not 'rapid in the British army.'

The 'menu' shows that Mr. Secretary Cardwell was anxious to wipe out the recollection of regulation 'bully' and 'control' beef. The list of good things was printed in gold, red, and blue, on a card of green. The 'menu' was decorated with medallions containing the royal arms, surrounded by the collar of the Garter, a view of an encampment in which hired horses were a prominent feature, and a not very imposing sketch of Stonehenge.

Some care was taken to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the German and French guests. 'Bombs à la Strasburg,' and 'Jambon à la Wagram,' were conspicuous by their absence. Apropos of our foreign friends—in the course of the evening I saw one of the officers to whose charge they had been entrusted during the manoeuvres, and asked him how he got on with them.

'Oh, very well,' he replied. 'I had a little difficulty with the representative of the United States, but the rest were excessively quiet.'

'What did the Yankee do?'

'He was a good fellow enough, but had a rooted objection to horseriding. The third day he refused to mount, and we had to provide him with a Hansom cab during the rest of the campaign. On more than one occasion he formed the centre of a hollow square.'

'What, in a cab?'

'Yes, in full uniform. Our

men didn't pay much attention to him—they thought he was the commanding officer of some country Volunteer Corps.'

The banquet was like ordinary State dinners. It was enlivened by the strains of the Grenadier band, and I could not help contrasting the neat programme of the Guards with the rather pretentious card of the menu. The chief piece was a pot-pourri of 'the national airs of Europe,' which preceded Gungl's 'Abschied von München' valse, and followed the 'Agnus Dei' of Mozart. We were only asked to drink one toast, 'The Queen,' and then we retired *en masse* into the ante-room.

And now, having disposed of the place, and discussed the banquet, I may be permitted to turn to the guests. A mass of colour, lighted up with jewels and gold. Plenty of scarlet, and a little blue. Here, standing in a group of veterans, was 'the officer commanding-in-chief.' He wore his field-marshal's uniform and all his medals, and looked the very picture of a soldier. I could not help feeling that the foreigners present must have envied us the liberty of the mess-room, which permits a prince of the royal blood, and the supreme head of the army, to chat with his inferiors with perfect ease—nay, even with familiarity. The Duke's friends were 'Charlies,' 'Billies,' and 'Harries;' and yet the familiarity was not of that kind which breeds contempt. Not far from his Royal Highness was Mr. Cardwell, in the richly-embroidered uniform of a Cabinet minister. In spite of his sword, and gold and blue tail-coat, he looked every inch of him a civilian. He talked affably with many of his guests, paying special attention to the representatives of foreign states. He was particularly cheerful, and

reminded me strongly of a young author who had passed through that trying ordeal, the first night of a first piece. He had reason to be satisfied, for certainly the autumn manoeuvres had proved a gigantic success. Standing near the War Secretary, and talking to his own lieutenant-colonel (wearing the gorgeous uniform of the 10th Hussars), was the Heir-Apparent to the throne himself. Looking very little the worse for his severe illness, the Prince of Wales seemed to have quite recovered from the shock of being claimed as a prisoner by a regiment of militia. And now I come to notabilities of lesser mark. Here was the commanding officer of one of the household brigades (a plunger, by-the-by), who had secured eternal renown by painting the breastplates of his troopers a dark brown. I almost regretted that we had not enjoyed the excitement of a German invasion that we might have tried conclusions with the 'Uhlans.' With Marshall's 'heavies,' and the 'light bobs' of Baker, we would prove a match for all the cavalry in the world. So I thought—after dinner!

Among the very few civilians present I 'noticed' (as they say in the 'Morning Post') the rising man at the War Office. Bearing the name of one of England's greatest poets, and 'bearded like the pard,' he seemed quite at his ease amusing the warriors who surrounded him. I was not surprised at this, as this distinguished individual had smelt gunpowder, not on a parade ground but at the seat of war. Many years ago, when we had made a fine mess of the Crimean campaign, he was despatched to Balaklava to set things to rights. No easy task, but one very easily accomplished. As I looked at him I could not

help recalling some of the stories I had heard related of his nerve and *sang-froid*. The very day of his arrival in the Crimea was not without adventure. He was told off to a tent that had been used as a dead-house! Instead of being alarmed he secured a little chloride of lime, and finding that no other accommodation was to be had, made himself as much at home as if he had been occupying his own house in London. Before the enemy he was as calm as in Pall Mall. Assuredly there are many heroes who are not soldiers, even as there are many soldiers who, I regret to say, have no chance of ever shining as heroes. Another civilian of note was the permanent Under-Secretary, a gentleman who, when he represented the Treasury, was described in 'the House' as an official who had nothing to do but to smoke 'cigars.' Fresh from Switzerland, he looked nearly as bronzed as the warriors of the autumn campaign; and from his tone and style it struck me that he was the very last man in the world to be idle when there was work to do.

To return to the military. There, standing near an officer (who, by-the-by, was as much respected by the Prussian chiefs in the past as he is liked by the Woolwich cadets in the present), was a veteran—a veteran who, in spite of his years, is still known as 'the handsomest man in the service.' If you see his long white locks you may be sure that 'the Duke' is near at hand. Next to him was the popular general who is punningly called, at Aldershot, 'the Hope of the British army.' A fine old soldier, who knows more about cavalry than infantry—a man to lead a Balaklava charge, not to fight a battle of Inkermann. A little bit of a martinet, perhaps, but as kindly as the great Wel-

lington himself. I remember that rather an amusing story was told about him when he commanded an army during the first autumn manoeuvres—the series of 1871. Before the flying column was despatched from Cove Common he made a tour of inspection. Of course his appearance provoked a general salute. As he was returning to his quarters he met a militiaman, who passed him without paying him what is called by the Queen's Regulations a 'compliment.'

'Here, you sir!' cried the General. 'Do you know who I am?'

'Of course I do—General——'

'Then why don't you salute me?'

'Well, you *are* in a precious hurry,' replied the militiaman. 'I *was* going to salute you, but now, as you have made such a fuss about it, I just shan't!'

History is silent regarding the fate of the presumptuous private—I know not whether he was shot, hanged, or drawn and quartered. I believe that if he had fallen into the hands of General Maxwell he would have had a fair chance of—well, never mind, the officer I have

named does not love the militia. And with these short notes I leave the subject of the guests. However, I may say that, unhappily, there is a strong family resemblance amongst soldiers. A moustache, short hair, and military whiskers—*cum* a nose either Grecian or Roman—and there you have 'the portrait of an officer' complete. So I found at the banquet of the 13th of last September; and, as everything in the army is arranged 'by regulation'—the same thoughts strike the same men, even as the same words are said and the same things are done—the result is a commonplace, uninteresting uniformity. Under these circumstances, I was not altogether sorry when the signal was given to disperse. I put on my military overcoat, made my way into Pall Mall, walked up St. James's Street, and was home. I lighted a cigar, and then shifted Mr. Cardwell's letter of invitation from the right side of my chimney-glass to the left; for the reception at the War Office had become, like many other things, a story of the past.



## ‘NO INTENTIONS.’

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF ‘LOVE’S CONFLICT,’ ‘VERONIQUE,’ ETC.

### CHAPTER I.

IT is towards the close of a long, bright day in June, that a young collegian enters, somewhat hastily, the courtyard of an inn on the outskirts of one of our university towns.

‘Holloa there!’ he calls sharply to a skulking ostler, who recognises him with a touch of the forelock; ‘bring my horse round, will you, and be quick about it!’

As the ostler disappears to obey his orders the young man leans lazily against the stable wall, and the traces of some secret care or annoyance are very visible upon his countenance. He ought to possess neither; for he is young, good-looking, affluent, and of high birth, being the second son of the Earl of Norham: but what charm is there to make even earls’ sons invulnerable against the effects of the woes which they create for themselves? A few months back Eric Keir almost believed that the world was made for him and men in the same position as himself; to-day, he would give the world, were it his own, to be able to retrace his steps and undo that which is irremediable. And yet he has not completed his two-and-twentieth year!

As the ostler brings his horse—a fine bay animal of some value—up to his side, Eric Keir starts as though he had been dreaming, and seizing the reins abruptly, is about to spring into the saddle. His foot, however, has but reached the stirrup, when he is accosted from the other side.

‘Why, Keir, old fellow! what an

age it is since we met! Where have you been hiding yourself? I seem to have seen scarcely anything of you during the whole term.’ And the hand of Saville Moxon, a fellow student, though not at the same college, is thrust forward eagerly to take his own.

At which, Eric Keir descends to earth again with an appearance of being less pleased than embarrassed at this encounter with his friend, who is, moreover, intimately acquainted with all the members of his family.

‘If you have not seen me, Moxon, it is your own fault,’ he replies, moodily; ‘for you know where to find me when I am at home.’

‘Ah! exactly so, my dear fellow,—when you are at home; but have you any distinct recollection of when you last practised that rather negative virtue? For my part, I can affirm that you have sported the oak on, at least, a dozen occasions during the last two months, when I have been desirous of palming my irreproachable company upon you. What do you do with yourself out of college hours?’

At this question, innocent though it appears, Keir visibly reddens, and then tries to cover his confusion by a rough answer.

‘Much the same as you do, I suppose;—much the same as every man does who is condemned to be cooped up for three parts of the year in this musty old town: try to forget that there is such a place.’

But Saville Moxon is not to be put out of temper so easily.

'By riding out of it, as you are going to do now,' he says, with a light laugh, as he lays his hand upon the horse's mane. 'Where are you bound to, Eric?'

'What business is that of yours?' is trembling upon the lips of Eric Keir; but he represses the inclination to utter it, and substitutes the answer, 'Nowhere in particular.'

'Then don't let me detain you. I want to speak to you, but I can walk by your side a little way;—or, stay: I dare say they have an animal in the stables they can let me have, and we'll take a gallop together—as we used to do in the old days, Keir.'

But to this proposal Eric Keir appears anything but agreeable.

'By no means,' he rejoins, hastily. 'At least, I know they have nothing you would care to mount; and I am quite at your service, Moxon, if you wish to speak to me. Here, ostler! hold my horse.'

'But why should I keep you from your ride?'

'Because I prefer it;—prefer, that is to say, speaking to a friend quietly to howling at him across the road. Let us turn out of this courtyard, where every wall has ears and every window a pair of eyes. And now what is your business with me?'

The young men have gained the road by this time, which is sufficiently removed from the town to be very dusty, and shaded by leafy trees.

'Who would ever have thought of meeting you out here, Keir?' is Moxon's first remark. 'And how long is it since you developed a taste for country lanes and hedges?'

'I don't admire quickset hedges more than I ever did; but when a man rides for exercise, one direction is as good as another.'

'But what induced you to remove your horse from Turnhill's? Didn't they do justice to him?'

'Well—yes—' in a hesitating manner. 'I had no particular fault to find with them; but these stables are more convenient.'

'Less so, I should have imagined. Why, you have nearly a mile more to walk to them.'

'Perhaps I like walking: any way, that's my business. What's yours?'

At this curt rejoinder, Saville Moxon turns round and regards him steadily in the face.

'What is the matter, Keir?' he says, kindly. 'Are you ill? And, now I come to look at you, you have certainly grown much thinner since I saw you last; and, if you were not such a lazy fellow, I should say you had been overworking yourself.'

To which Keir responds, with a harsh laugh—

'Yes, Moxon, that's it—too much study. It's an awfully bad thing for young fellows of our age—so trying to the constitution! Ha! ha! ha!'

'But you really don't look yourself, Keir, for all that. I am afraid you must have been living too fast. Don't do it, dear old fellow—for all our sakes.'

The affectionate tone touches some chord in Eric Keir's heart, and he answers, almost humbly—

'Indeed I have not been living fast, Moxon; on the contrary, I think I have been keeping better hours this term than usual. One comes so soon to the conviction that all that kind of thing is not only degrading, but wrong. Yet one may have troubles, nevertheless. How are all your people at home?'

'Very well indeed, thank you; and that brings me to the subject of my business with you. It is odd I should have met you this after-



noon, considering how much separated we have been of late; for if I had not done so, I should have been obliged to write.'

'What about?'

'I had a letter from your brother Muiraven this morning.'

'Ah!—more than I had: it's seldom either of them honour me.'

'Perhaps they despair of finding you—as I almost began to do. Any way, Lord Muiraven's letter concerns you as much as myself. He wants us to join him in a walking tour.'

'When?'

'During the vacation, of course.'

'Where to?'

'Brittany, I believe.'

'I can't go.'

'Why not? it will be a jolly change for you. And my brother Alick is most anxious to be of the party. Fancy what fun we four should have!—it would seem like the old school days coming over again.'

'When we were always together, and always in scrapes,' Keir interrupts, eagerly. 'I *should* like to go.'

'What is there to prevent you?'

His face falls immediately.

'Oh! I don't know—nothing in particular—only, I don't fancy it will be such fun as you imagine; these tours turn out such awful failures sometimes; besides—'

'Besides—what?'

'It will be a great expense; and I'm rather out of pocket this term.'

'That is no obstacle, for you are to go as Muiraven's guest. He says especially—let me see, where is the letter?—producing it from his pocket as he speaks. 'Ah! here it is: "Tell Eric, he is to be my guest, and so are you"—though, for the matter of that,' continues Moxon, as he refolds the letter and puts it in the envelope, 'my accepting his offer, and your accept-

ing it, are two very different things.'

'I can't go, nevertheless; and you may write and tell him so.'

'You had better write yourself, Keir; you may be able to give your brother the reason, which you refuse to me.'

After this, they pace up and down for a few minutes in silence: minutes which appear long to Eric Keir, for he pulls out his watch meanwhile to ascertain the hour.

'Keir! are you in debt?' says Moxon.

'Not a penny—or, at all events, not a penny that I shall be unable to pay upon demand. Has any one been informing you to the contrary?'

'No one—it was but a surmise. I hope, then,—I hope there is no truth in the rumour that has reached me, that you find more charms in a certain little village, not twenty miles from Oxford, than in anything the old town contains!'

Saville Moxon is hardly prepared for the effect which his words produce. For Eric Keir stops short upon the country path which they are traversing, and the veins rise upon his forehead, and his whole face darkens and changes beneath the passion which he cannot help exhibiting, although he is too courteous to give vent to it without further cause.

'What village?' he demands quickly.

'Fretterley!'

Then the knowledge that he is in the wrong, and gossip in the right, and that something he is very anxious to keep secret is on the verge of being discovered, gets the better of Eric Keir's discretion, and he flares out in an impetuous manner, very much in character with his quick, impulsive nature—

'And what the d—l do your

confounded friends mean by meddling in my affairs?"

"Who said they were friends of mine?" retorts Moxon; and the laugh with which he says it is as oil cast on the flame of Eric Keir's wrath.

"I will allow of no interference with anything I choose to do or say. I am not a child, to be followed, and gaped at, and cackled about, by a parcel of old women in breeches; and you may tell your informant so, from me, as soon as you please."

"Keir, this is folly, and you know it. Fretterley and its doings are too near at hand to escape all observation; and the fact of your visiting there, and the Vicar of the parish having three very pretty daughters, is quite sufficient to set the gossips talking; but not to provoke such an ebullition of anger from yourself."

"I don't care a fig about the Vicar, or his daughters either! But I do care to hear that I can't ride a mile in one direction or another without all Oxford talking of it. I hate that style of feminine cackle which some of the fellows of the college have taken up; and I say again, that they are a set of confounded meddlers; and if I catch any one of them prying into my concerns, I won't leave him a whole bone in his body!"

"You are childish!" exclaims Moxon. "As I repeated the report, Keir, I suppose I am one of the "confounded meddlers" you allude to, and it may not be safe for me to remain longer in your company. And so, good day to you, and a better spirit when we meet again." And turning abruptly from him, he commences to walk in the direction of the town. But slowly, and somewhat sadly: for he has known Eric Keir from boyhood, and, imperious as he is with strangers, it is not often he exhibits

the worst side of his character to his friends.

For a moment—whilst pride and justice are struggling for the mastery within him—Eric looks at the retreating figure and then, with sudden impulse, he strides hastily after Moxon, and tenders him his hand.

"Forgive me, Saville! I was wrong—I hardly knew what I was saying."

"I was sure you would confess it, sooner or later, Eric; your faults are all upon the surface."

And then they shake hands heartily, and feel themselves again.

"But about this Fretterley business," says Eric, after a slight hesitation: "stop the gossip as much as lies in your power, there's a good fellow! For I swear to you I have no more intention of making love to the Vicar's daughters, than I have to the Vicar himself."

"I never supposed you had. But when young and fashionable men persist in frequenting one locality, the lookers-on will draw their inferences. We are not all earls' sons, remember, Eric; and you dwell in the light of an unenviable notoriety."

"Unenviable indeed, if even one's footsteps are to be dogged! And fancy what my father would say, if such a rumour reached his ears!"

"He would think nothing of it, Keir. He knows that you love him too well to dream of making a *mésalliance*."

"Who talks of a *mésalliance*?" interposes the other, hurriedly.

"Myself alone. The Vicar's daughters, though exceedingly handsome and, no doubt, very amiable girls, are not in the position of life from which Lord Norham expects you to choose a wife. He thinks a great deal of you, Eric."

"More's the pity; he had much better build his hopes on Muir-aven, or Cecil."

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'Oh! Cecil will never marry. Young as he is, he is marked out for a bachelor. And as for Muiraven, he will, in all probability, have to sacrifice his private instincts to public interests. Besides,'—in a lowered voice—'you should never forget that, were anything to happen to Muiraven, the hopes of the family would be set upon you.'

'Don't talk such nonsense, Moxon. Muiraven's life is worth ten of mine, thank God! and Cecil and I mean to preserve our liberty intact, and leave marriage for the young and the gay: yourself, *par exemple*.'

'Call a poor devil who has nothing but his own brains to look to for a subsistence, young and gay? My dear boy, you'll be a grandfather before I have succeeded in inducing any woman to accept my name and nothing a year.'

'Ugh!'—with a shudder—'what an awful prospect! I'd as soon hang myself.'

'Well, it needn't worry you just yet,' says Moxon, with a laugh. 'But I must not keep you any longer from your ride. Shall you be in your rooms to-morrow evening, Keir?'

'Probably—that is, I will make a point of being there, if you will come and take supper with me. And bring over Summers and Charlton with you. And look here, Moxon,—stop this confounded rumour about me, at all hazards, for heaven's sake!'

'If there is no truth in it, why should you object to its circulation?' inquires Moxon, bluntly.

'There is no truth in it. I hardly know the man by sight, or his daughters; but you are aware of my father's peculiarities, and how the least idea of such a thing would worry him.'

'We should have Lord Norham down here in no time, to find out

the truth for himself. So it's lucky for you, old fellow,'—observing Keir's knitted brows—'that there's nothing for him to find out.'

'Yes—of course; but I hate everything in the shape of town-talk, true or otherwise.'

'There shall be no more, if I can prevent it, Keir. Good-bye!'

'Good-bye, till to-morrow evening; and don't be later than ten.'

He remains on the spot where Saville Moxon left him for a moment, and then turns, musingly, towards the courtyard of the inn again.

'What on earth can have put Fretterley into their heads,' he ponders, 'when I have been so scrupulously careful, that even the ostler at the village inn doesn't know me by my right name? It's an awful nuisance, and will entail a move at the very time when I can least afford it. My usual luck!' And, with a shrug of the shoulders, Eric Keir re-enters the stable-yard. The man is still waiting there with his horse, and, when the gentleman is mounted, he touches his cap and asks when he may be expected to return.

'Impossible to say,' is the unsatisfactory rejoinder; and in another minute Keir has driven his spurs into the animal's side and is galloping, to make up for lost time, along the road which leads——to Fretterley.

As he rides hurriedly and carelessly along, his thoughts are conflicting and uneasy. His impulsive and unthinking nature has led him into the commission of an act which is more than rash—which is unpardonable, and of which he already bitterly repents; and he sees the effect of this youthful folly closing about him and hedging him in, and the trouble it will probably entail, stretching out over

a long vista of coming years, to end perhaps only with his life.

He knows that his father (a most loving and affectionate father, of whom he has no fear beyond that begotten by the dread of wounding his affection) cherishes high hopes for him and expects great things—greater things than Eric thinks he has the power of performing. For Lord Muiraven, though a young man of sterling merit—'the dearest fellow in the world,' as his brothers will inform you—is not clever: he knows it himself, and all his friends know it, and that Eric has has the advantage over him, not only in personal appearance, but in brains. And though it would be too much to affirm that Lord Norham has ever wished his sons could change places, there is no doubt that, whilst he looks on Muiraven as the one who shall carry on his titles to a future generation, his pride is fixed on Eric; and the ease with which the young fellow has disposed of his university examinations, and the passport into society his agreeable manners have gained for him, are topics of unfailing interest to the Earl.

And it is this knowledge, added to the remembrance of a motherless childhood sheltered by paternal care from every sorrow, that makes his own conduct smite so bitterly on the heart of Eric Keir. How *could* he have done it? Oh! what a fool—what an ungrateful, unpardonable fool he has made of himself! And there is no way out of the evil: he has destroyed that which will not bear patching—his self-respect! As the conviction presses home to him, tears, which do him no dishonour, rise to his eyes, yet are forced back again, as though to weep had been a sin. How much the creatures suffer who cannot, or who dare not, cry! God gave ready tears to women, in

consideration of their weakness—it is only strong hearts and stronger minds that can bear torture with dry eyes.

But there is little trace of weakness left on the face of Eric Keir, as, after an hour's hard riding, he draws rein before the village inn of Fretterley. The young collegian seems well known there; for before he has had time to summon the ostler, the landlord himself appears at the front door, to ease him of his rein, and is shouting for some one to come and 'old Mr. 'Amilton's 'orse' while he draws 'Mr. 'Amilton's beer.'

'Mr. 'Amilton' appears to respond but languidly to the exertions made on his behalf; for he drinks the beer which is handed him, mechanically, and, without further comment, turns on his heel, much to the disappointment of the landlord, who has learned to look regularly for the offer of one of those choice cigars of which the young gentleman is usually so lavish.

'Something up there, I bet,' he remarks to the partner of his bosom; 'getting tired of her, I shouldn't wonder: they all does it, sooner or later. Men will be men.'

'Men will be men! men will be brutes, you mean!' she retorts in her shrill treble; and, from the sound of her voice, the landlord thinks it as well not to pursue the subject any further.

Not afraid of her—oh dear no! What husband ever was afraid of anything so insignificant as the weaker vessel?—only—Well, landlord, have it thine own way; it does us no harm!

Meanwhile Eric Keir has walked beyond the village, perhaps a quarter of a mile, to where a small farm cottage, surrounded by a garden of shrubs, stands back from the highway. He pushes open the painted wicket with his foot, more

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impetuously than he need have done, and advances to the hall door. Before he can knock or ring, it is thrown open to him, and a woman flings herself upon his neck.

She is a girl still, though several years older than himself; but a woman is in the glow of youth at five-and-twenty: and this woman has not only youth but beauty.

'I wish you would remember, Myra, that I am standing at the front door, and reserve these demonstrations of affection for a more private place. I have told you of it so often.'

He disengages her arms from his throat as he speaks, and her countenance lowers and changes. It is easy to see that she is quick to take offence, and that the repulse has wounded her. So they pass into the sitting-room in silence, and whilst Eric Keir, monarch of all he surveys, throws himself into an easy chair, she stands by the table, somewhat sulkily, waiting for him to make the next advances.

'Is old Margaret at home, Myra?'

'I believe so.'

'Tell her to bring me some claret. I seem to have swallowed all the dust between this and Oxford.'

She does his bidding, bringing the wine with her own hands, and when she has served him, she sits down by the window.

'Come here, child,' he says presently, in a patronizing yet authoritative voice that accords strangely with his boyish exterior. 'What's the matter with you to-day? why won't you speak to me?'

'Because you don't care to hear me speak,' she answers in a low tone, full of emotion, as she kneels beside his chair. She has large, lustrous, dark eyes, and soft brown hair that flows and curls about her neck, and a pair of passionate red

lips that are on a dangerous level with his own. What man could resist them? But Eric Keir's mouth bends down to press her upturned forehead only. It is evident that she has lost her power to charm him. Yet his reply is not only patient, but kind.

'What has put that nonsense into your head? Don't make more worries than you need, Myra: we have enough already, heaven knows!'

'But why haven't you been to see me for so many days, then? You don't know how long the time seems without you! Are you getting tired of me, Eric?'

'Tired!'—with a smile that is sadder than a sigh. 'It is early days for you and me to talk of getting tired of each other, Myra. Haven't we made all kinds of vows to pass our lives together?'

'Then why have you been such a time away?'

'I have had business to detain me; it was impossible to come before.'

'What sort of business?'

'Engagements—at college and amongst my friends.'

'Friends whom you love more than me!' she retorts quickly, her jealous disposition immediately on the *qui vive*.

'It is not fair for you to say so, Myra. I can give you no greater proof of my attachment than I have already given.'

'Ah! but I want more, Eric. I want to be with you always: to leave you neither day nor night: to have the right to share in your pleasures and your pains.'

He frowns visibly.

'More pains than pleasures, as you would find, Myra. But it is impossible: I have told you so already; the circumstances of the case forbid it.'

'How can I tell, when you are absent, if you are always thinking

of me?—if some other woman does not take my place in your heart?"

'You must trust me, Myra. I am a gentleman, and I tell you that it is not the case—that it never will be.'

'Ah! but you cannot tell—you cannot tell!' And here she falls to weeping, and buries her face upon the arm of his chair.

'My poor girl!' says Keir, compassionately.

He does not love her—that is to say, he does not love as he thought he did three months ago, when he believed that he was doing a generous and chivalrous thing in raising her from her low estate to the position she now occupies, and swearing unalterable fidelity at her feet—but he feels the deepest pity, both for her and for himself—and he would wipe out the past with his blood, if it were possible.

'My poor girl—my poor Myra!' stroking the luxuriant hair which is flung across his knee—'we have much to forgive each other! Did ever man and woman drag each other more irreparably down than we have done?'

'You have ceased to love me—I know you have!' she continues, through her tears.

'Why should you torture me with such an accusation,' he says, impatiently, as he shakes himself free of the clinging arms, and, rising, walks to the window, 'when I have already assured you that it is not true? What have I done to make you imagine I am changed?'

'You do not come to see me—you do not caress me—you do not even look at me as you used to do.'

'Good heavens! for how long do you expect me to go on "looking"—whatever that operation may consist of?'

'Oh, Eric! you cannot deceive me: you know you are sorry that we ever met.'

Sorry—ay, God knows that he

is sorry; but he will not tell her so. Yet neither will he fly to her embrace, as three months back he would have done, to assure her that she does his love a cruel wrong by the suspicion. He only stands quietly by the open window, and taking a cigar from his case, lights it and commences smoking; whilst she continues to sob, in an angry, injured manner, by the arm-chair where he left her.

'Myra! I have but a short time to stay here to-day; why shouldn't we pass it pleasantly together? Upon my word, if you go on like this every time we meet, you will make the place too hot to hold me. Come—dry your eyes, like a good girl, and tell me what you have been doing since I saw you last.'

She dashes away her tears, and rises from her kneeling posture; but there is still a tone of sullenness or pride in the voice with which she answers him.

'What should I have been doing, but waiting for your arrival? I should have gone to Oxford, most probably, and tried to find your rooms, if you had not appeared this evening.'

'You had better not attempt that,' he says, decisively.

'But you neglect me, Eric: even old Margaret remarks it; and the Vicar said—'

'The Vicar!'—starting. 'When did you see the Vicar?'

'The day before yesterday, when he called here.'

'Who let him in?'

'I did!'—rather defiantly. 'Old Margaret was out.'

'And what communication passed between you?'

'He asked if my name was Mrs. Hamilton?—and I said "Yes."'

'What on earth made you say so?'

'Well—haven't you always called me Mrs. Hamilton? Isn't it the name I go by in the village?'





Drawn by Frank Dickson.

### NO INTENTIONS.

"Look above!" she entreated faintly, "how did you ever fail me, Joe?"

of me?—if some other woman does not take my place in your heart?

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'Ah! but you cannot tell—you cannot tell!' And here she falls to weeping, and buries her face upon the arm of his chair.

'My poor girl!' says Erel, compassionately.

He does not know how—that is to say, he does not know what he thought he did three months ago, when he believed that Myra was a generous and self-sacrificing girl in raising her from her low estate to the position she now occupies, and sincerely regretted his folly at her feet—how he feels the deepest pity, with the heart that he himself—and he would wipe out the past with his sword, if it were possible.

'My poor girl—she poor Myra!' stroking the wavy hair which is long somewhat loose—we have much to forgive each other! Did ever man and woman drag each other more miserably down than we have done?

'You have ceased to love me—I know you have!' she continues, through her tears.

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'Good heavens! for how long do you expect me to go on "looking"—whatever that operation may consist of?'

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'Sorry—ay, God knows that he

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'You had better not attempt that,' he says, decisively.

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'The Vicar?'—starting. 'When did you see the Vicar?'

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'He asked if my name was Mrs. Hamilton?—and I said "Yes."'

'What on earth made you say so?'

'Well—haven't you always called me Mrs. Hamilton? Isn't it the name I go by in the village?'



Drawn by Frank Dicksee.]

### NO INTENTIONS.

'Lord above!' she continues faintly, 'how did you ever find me, Joel?'

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'Not through my means, Myra. I have never mentioned you to anybody, in Fretterley or out of it. And pray, what had the Vicar to say to "Mrs. Hamilton?"'

'He asked if you were Mr. Hamilton: he has seen you riding through the village, and——'

'Don't tell me that you connected our names together before him!' interrupts Keir, with a look of anger.

'Well!—what was I to say?'

'What were you to say? You knew well enough what to say to get yourself or me out of a scrape, a few months back. But I see through your design, Myra—you want to force me to do that against which you know I am determined.'

'I cannot bear this continual separation,' she replies; 'it is killing me. I cannot live without you.'

'Listen to me, Myra,' he says, approaching closer to enforce his argument. 'You say you cannot bear this separation; but if you attempt to elude it by any devices of your own, you shall never see me again. You cannot say that I have deceived you: you threw in your lot with mine of your free consent; more than that—you urged me to the step which has brought, God knows, its retribution with it. But if you make our position public, you will do me an irreparable wrong, and injure your own cause. So I warn you!'

'Of what?'

'That suspicion has already fallen upon me for being foolish enough to visit you so openly; so much so, that I had decided, before coming here to-day, to move you as soon as possible from Fretterley; and if the rumour is not stopped by that means, I shall go away till it is forgotten.'

'Where?' she inquires, breathlessly.

'In the country, or abroad;—anywhere to baulk the gossips.'

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'And without me, Eric?'

'Without you? Of course. What good would it do if I took you with me? Why, if the least hint of such a thing were to reach my father's ears, he would ask me all about it, and I should tell him the truth. I have never told him anything but the truth,' adds the young fellow, simply; 'and I believe it would kill him.'

'And you would give me up for your father?' she says, quickly.

'A thousand times over! My father is everything in the world to me; and I can't think how I ever could have permitted myself to do that which would so much grieve him.'

A dark flush overspreads her handsome features as she hears the unpalatable truth, and her full breast heaves and her lips tremble with the deep pain it causes her. She is passing through the greatest agony a woman is capable of feeling: coming gradually, but surely, to the conviction that her reign is over, her empire overthrown—that she has lost her place in her lover's heart.

And she loves him so passionately: she has always cared for him far more than he has done for her, and his increasing coldness drives her mad.

'You said that I was everything in the world to you, three months ago,' she answers, with set teeth.

'I know I did; and at the time I believed it to be true. But I have told you, Myra, what a proud, high family mine is, and how seldom their escutcheon has been tarnished with dishonour. And—forgive me for saying so—I know it is my own fault, but I cannot help being conscious of the fact that I have tarnished it now. And my poor father thinks so much—too much of me; I feel as though I should never be able to look him in the face again.' And with that,

Eric Keir buries his own face in his hands.

She taps the floor impatiently with her foot.

'You are ashamed of me, Eric.'

'I am bitterly ashamed of myself, and of all that has passed between us.'

'It would have been better if we had never met.'

'Far better—both for you and for myself. Who could think otherwise?'

'It would be better, perhaps, if I were dead.'

'It would be better if we were both dead,' he exclaims bitterly; 'or had died before we saw each other. Oh, Myra—Myra! why will you wring such cruel truths from my mouth? you have been the death of all good things in me.'

He lifts his face to hers, and she is shocked to see the pain portrayed there. She is an illiterate, low-born woman, with nothing to recommend her beyond her beauty and her fierce love for him, which, yet, is like the love of an unreasoning animal, overpowering when encouraged, and apt to turn the first time it is thwarted. But she has one indomitable passion—pride, and it is stirring and working in her now.

'Would you be happy if you could undo the past?' she says in a low voice; 'if there had been no such person as me in the world, and you had never fancied that you loved me?'

'Happy!' he answers, with a sad laugh. 'I should be happy if I could wipe out the remembrance with my blood: if I could go about the world with a free conscience at the expense of everything that I possess. But come, Myra, let us talk no more of impossibilities. The past is past, my child, and nothing you or I can say will ever undo it. Let us think of the present. It is necessary you should leave Fret-

terley;—where would you like to go?'

'I don't care. You may choose for me.'

'Very well, then; I will think the matter over, and let you know. I shan't be able to come here to-morrow, as I have an engagement in the town; but the day after you may depend on seeing me. Do you want any money?'—taking out his purse.

But she shrinks from the note he offers her as though it had been a serpent.

'No—no! I am not in want of it: I have plenty to serve my need.'

'All the better for me,' he says, laughing. He has recovered his spirits again; clouds are not long in passing with the young.

'Well—good-bye,' he continues, as he takes the girl in his arms and kisses her, in a fraternal manner, on the cheek. 'It's a shame of me to have made those pretty eyes so red! Don't think twice of what I have said, Myra; you urged me on to it with your cross-questioning, and you know I lament this business for both our sakes; but the dark mood will be gone to-morrow. It's nothing unusual, after three months of honeymoon, my dear.'

She clings to him frantically close, but she says nothing.

'Why, won't you say good-bye? Then I must go without it, for I have no more time to lose.'

He is moving towards the door, when she flies after him, and almost stifles him in her embrace.

'Oh! good-bye, my love!—my darling!—my own, own, dearest love!'

She showers kisses, almost roughly on his mouth, his eyes, his brow: kisses which he accepts rather philosophically than otherwise, and from which he frees himself with a sigh of relief.

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Alas! for the love of one-and-twenty, when it begins to temper its enthusiasm with philosophy!

As, with a cheerful nod, he turns out of the wicket gate, the woman stands gazing after him as though she has been turned to stone; and when he has finally disappeared, she gropes her way back to the sitting-room, and casts herself headlong on the floor.

'Gone—gone!' she moans; 'all gone, and my life gone with it! Oh! I wish that I was dead—I wish that I was buried—I wish that I could neither feel nor think—I am nothing to him now——'

She lies there for, perhaps, an hour, sobbing and moaning to herself; and is only roused by the entrance of the old woman she calls Margaret, with the preparations for her tea, and whose grunt at perceiving her attitude is half of compassion and half of contempt.

'Lord ha' mussy!' she exclaims, 'and whatever are you a lying on the boards for?'

This woman, who is clothed and kept like one of gentle birth, and by whom she is fed and paid her wages, is yet not addressed by Margaret in terms befitting a servant to use towards her mistress. The poor are ever keenest at detecting a would-be lady from a real one.

The familiar tone affronts Myra; she reads in it, not sympathy, but rebellion against her new-born dignity, and she rises and sweeps out of the room, without deigning to notice the presence of her factotum.

But the bed-room is solitary and full of sad remembrance, and in a few minutes she emerges from it, dressed for walking, and saunters in the garden.

It is a queer little nest that

Eric Keir has chosen for her, being originally intended for the game-keeper's cottage on an estate which has long since been parted with, acre by acre, and its very name sunk in the obscurity of three or four small farms; so that the cottage stands alone in the midst of wheat and barley fields; and it is through one of these, where the grain, young, and green, and tender, and not higher than a two-years' child, springs up on each side of her, that Myra, still burning as under the sense of a deep outrage, takes her way. A resolution has been growing up in her heart during the last hour which, betwixt its pride and stubbornness, it will not easily relinquish—the resolution to part with Eric Keir.

It wrenches her very soul even to think of such a thing, and as she resolves impossible ways and means for its accomplishment, her breath is hardly drawn; but she has a will of iron, and he has wounded her in her most vulnerable part. As she paces slowly up and down the narrow field-path, the jealous, angry tears scarce dried upon her cheeks, she hears a rustle in the corn behind her, and the next moment some one touches her upon the shoulder.

Myra is not chicken-hearted, but she is quick to resent an insult.

'How dare you?' she commences, angrily; but as she turns and faces the intruder, her tone is changed to one of consternation.

'Lord above!' she continues faintly. 'How did you ever find me, Joel?'

She is so taken by surprise that she has turned quite pale, and the hand she offers him is fluttering like a bird.

'Find you!' exclaims the newcomer (who, it may be as well at once to state, stands in the re-

lationship of cousin to her), 'I would have found you, Myra, if you had been at the furthest end of the whole world.'

'Aunt's not here, is she?' inquires Myra, with the quick fear that a woman in her equivocal position has of encountering the reproaches of one of her own sex; 'you're sure you're alone, Joel?'

'I'm all alone, Myra. Mother has enough to do to get her living, without coming all the way from Leicestershire to look after you. But I couldn't rest till I'd seen you: I couldn't believe what I've heard, except from your own lips. You've most broke my heart, Myra.'

'He is an uncouth, countryfied-looking fellow, without any beauty, except such as is conveyed by his love and his sorrow; but as he stands there, sheepishly enough, looking down upon the hand he still holds between his own, he commands all the respect due to the man who has done nothing for which he need blush.'

His earnestness seems to touch the girl, for she is silent and hangs down her head.

'When we heard that you had left the situation in the hotel where father placed you, and without a word of warning, we couldn't credit it. But some words as the master wrote to mother made us think as all wasn't right with you; and when weeks and months went by and we didn't hear nothing, I began to fear it was true. So I travelled up from home, little by little, doing a job here and a job there, till I got to Oxford, and could speak with the master myself; and though he couldn't satisfy me as to your whereabouts, I came to it by constant inquiry, and reached Fretterley last night. And now, Myra, come home with me. I don't want to make no words about it: I don't want to

hear nothing of what you've been doing—'twould only cut me up—but say you'll come back to the old place in Leicestershire, and then I shan't think my journey's been took in vain.'

He looks her in the eyes as he concludes, and she, unable to stand his scrutiny, drops her head upon his rough velvetreen shoulder, and begins to cry.

'Oh, Joel! if I could only tell you.'

'Tell me, my poor lass! where's the use of your telling me: can't I read the signs you carry about you? What's the meaning of a purple silk gown with lace fripperies upon your back, and a pair of gold drops in your ears, if it don't mean *shame*?'

'No! no! not that!' she cries, recoiling from him.

'I shall think less of you, Myra, if you call it by any other name. But the old home's open to you, my dear, all the same—open to receive and shelter you whenever you choose to come back to it, though you can't never bring the joy to it now that I once thought you would.'

The old home! How little she has thought of it of late! yet she can see it in her mind's eye, as she stands pondering his words. It was not a particularly happy home to her: the homes of the poor seldom are. She had known hunger, and thirst, and cold, and occasionally the sound of harsh words within its limits, yet the memory of the dull life she led there seems very peaceful now, compared to the excited and stormy scenes through which she has passed since leaving it.

The old home! It was not a paradise, but it was more like home to the low-born girl than daily association with a companion who is as far above her in birth as in intellect, and has grown but

too conscious of the gulf that lies between them.

Joel Cray takes her fit of musing for hesitation, and recommences his persuasion.

'I daresay *he*, whoever he may be—for I know there's a man at the bottom of all this, Myra, (curse him),' he adds *par parenthèse*—'I daresay he does all he can to persuade you that he loves you better than himself, and will be constant to you till death, but—'

'He does not,' she interrupts eagerly, in defence of the absent.

'What!' replies Joel, lost in astonishment, 'he's sick of you already! He steals you away from an honest family and an honest employment to make a—'

'Stop!' cries Myra, in a voice of authority.

'What am I to stop for?'

'You shall not call me by that name: it is a lie.'

'I wish to God you could prove it, Myra. What are you, then—his wife?'

'Of whom are you talking?' with passionate confusion. 'How do you know that there is any one? What right have you to come and bully me in this manner?'

'Myra! we were brought up together from little children; my mother was like your mother, and my home was your home; and long before you saw this chap, you knew that I loved you and looked to wed you when the proper time came—that's my right! And now, as we stand in God's sight together, tell me the truth. Are you married to the man, or are you not?'

At this point-blank question, she trembles, and grows red and white by turns, shrinking from the stern glance he fixes on her.

'Joel! don't look at me after that fashion, for I can't bear it!

O, Joel! you used to love me. Take me back to aunt, and the old place, and the children, for there's no one wants me here.'

'My poor lass! is it really as bad as that—only three months, and tired of you already? Well, well! you'd better have taken me, perhaps, after all—you've made a sorry bargain, Myra.'

'O, Joel! I love him—I love him beyond everything in the world. He is so clever, and so handsome, and so good to me. But I ain't fit for such as he is: I feel it at every turn. I can't talk, nor behave, nor look as he would wish me to do, and—in a lower voice—'he is ashamed of me, Joel.'

Poor Joel has been silently writhing under the mention of his rival's attributes, but the last clause is too much for him.

'Ashamed of you! the d-d villain! he ain't worthy to touch you. Oh, how I wish I had my fingers this moment at his wizen!'

'Hush, Joel! don't say such awful things, but—but—' with a choking sob, 'I'm nothing but a worry to him now: he wishes we had never met: he wishes I was dead, and he was rid of me.'

'Will you come home with me, or will you not?' shouts Joel, whose patience is thoroughly exhausted. 'If you stand there, Myra, a telling me any more of his insults, I swear I'll hunt him down like a dog, and set fire to every stick and stone that he possesses. Ah! you think, perhaps, that I don't know his name, and so he's safe from me; but it's *'Amilton*—there's for you—and if you disappoint me, I'll soon be upon his track.'

'O, Joel! don't be hard on me: you can't tell how I feel the parting with him.'

She turns her streaming eyes upon the cottage, whilst he, un-

able to bear the sight of her distress, paces up and down uneasily.

'Then you mean to come back with me, Myra?'

'Yes—yes—to-morrow.'

'To-morrow you'll have changed your mind.'

'What will there be to change it?' she answers, passionately.

'How can anything undo his words? He says I have been the death of all good things in him: that if it was possible he would wipe out even the memory of me with his blood; with his blood, Joel, think of that!'

'Well, them's insults, whatever they may mean, that you've no right to look over, Myra; and if you won't settle 'em, I shall.'

'You would not harm him, Joel!' fearfully.

'I'd break every bone in his body, if I'd the chance to, and grateful for it. But if you'll promise to give him up without any more to-do, and come back home with me, I'll leave him to Providence. He'll catch it in the next world, if not in this.'

'I have promised—I will do it—only give me one more night in the place where I have been so happy.'

He is not very willing to grant her this indulgence, but she exacts it from him, so that he is obliged to let her have her way, and passes the next twelve hours in a state of uninterrupted fear, lest he should appear to interpose his authority, or, after a night's reflection, *she* should play him false, and decide to remain where she is.

But Joel Cray need not have been afraid.

Myra spends the time indeed no less perplexedly than he does; but those who knew her innate pride and selfwill would have had no difficulty in guessing that it would come off conqueror at last.

'He would give me up a thousand times over for his *father*,' she keeps on repeating, when she finds her strength is on the point to fail; 'he said so, and he means it, and sooner or later it would be my fate. And I will not stay to be given up: I will go before he has the chance to desert me. I will not be told again that I tarnish his honour, and that we had better both be dead than I live to disgrace him.'

'I cannot bear it. I love him too much to be able to bear it. Perhaps, when he hears that I am gone, and comes to miss me (I am sure that he will miss me), he may be sorry for the cruel things he said, and travel England over till he finds me, and asks me to come back to him again.'

The soft gleam which her dark eyes assume as the thought strikes her, is soon chased away by the old sore memory.

'But he will never come; he only longs to be quit of me that he may walk with a free conscience through the world, and I am the stumbling-block in his way. O! he shall never say so again: he shall know what it is to be free: he shall never have the opportunity to say such bitter truths to me again.'

And so, with the morning light, the impetuous, unreasoning creature, without leaving sign or trace behind her to mark which way she goes, resigns herself into the hands of Joel Cray, and flies from Fretterley.

When, according to promise, Eric Keir pays another visit to the gamekeeper's cottage, there is only old Margaret to open the door and stare at him as though she had been bewitched.

'Where is your mistress?' he says, curtly: the expression of

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old women's faces not possessing much interest for him.

'Lor, sir! she's gone.'

'Gone! where—into the village?'  
'O! deary me! I knows nothing about it: she never spoke to me. How could I tell but what she'd left by your orders?'

'What do you mean? Has Mrs. Hamilton left Fretterley?'

'Yes, sir—I suppose so. I haven't seen nothing of her since yesterday morning.'

'Impossible!—without leaving a note or any explanation?'

'I don't know if you'll find a note amongst her things, sir! they're just as she left 'em: I haven't touched nothing; I knows my place better; and I'd rather you'd find out the truth for yourself, though I has my suspizzions, of course, which we're all liable to, rich and poor alike. But I haven't worried neither, knowing there's no call to fear but what my wages will be all right with an honourable gentleman like yourself.'

He makes no effort to restrain her cackle, but passes through the door she has thrown open in silence, and enters the deserted sitting-room. He does not know if he is awake or asleep: he feels as if he were moving in a dream.

Gone! Left him! without the intention of returning! It is impossible; she must mean to come back again: she is playing a foolish trick, in hopes of frightening him into compliance with that which she has so often asked, and he refused. But neither in bed or sitting-room can Eric Keir discover the least indication that Myra's absence is to be a temporary one; nor a written line of threatening or farewell. On the contrary, she has taken all the simplest articles of her attire with her, and left behind, strewn on the floor in proud neglect, the

richer things with which he has provided her. Weary, and utterly at a loss to account for this freak on the part of one who has appeared so entirely devoted to himself, Eric returns to the lower room, and summons old Margaret to his side.

'I can find nothing to account for Mrs. Hamilton's departure. What do you mean by having your suspicions?' he inquires in a determined voice.

'Well, sir—deary me! don't take offence at what I say; but truth is truth, and your lady didn't leave this house alone, as my own eyes is witness to.'

His face flushes, and as he puts the next question he shades it with his hand.

'Who did she leave it with, then? Speak out, woman, and don't keep me waiting here for ever!'

'O lor, sir! don't take on so, there's a dear gentleman. I can't rightly tell you, sir, never having seen the young man before; but he was hanging about here the evening you left, and talking with your lady in the field, and he fetched away her box with his own 'ands, yesterday morning, as I watched 'im from the kitchen winder. A country-looking young man he was, but not ill-favoured; and as they walked off together I see him kiss the mistress's cheek, that I did, if my tongue was to be cut out, for saying so, the very next minute.'

'There—there! that will do; go to your work, and hold your tongue, if such a thing is possible to you. You will remain on here, and when I have decided what is to be done with these things, I will let you know.'

And so saying, Eric Keir strides from the house again, mounts his horse, and retakes his way to Oxford.

'A young man, country-looking,

but not ill-favoured; some one of the friends from whom he has alienated her, perhaps. Certainly a person of her own class, and to whom she returns in preference to himself.

'How could he have ever been such a fool as to suppose that a woman taken from her station in life, accustomed to, and probably flattered by, the attentions of clodhoppers and tradesmen, could appreciate the niceties of such a sacred thing as honour, or the affection of an elevated and intellectual mind?'

So he says, in his first frenzy of wrath and jealousy and shame,

but so does he not entirely believe. The old woman's gossip has left a miserable doubt to rankle in his heart; but has not accomplished the death of his trust in the girl who has left him, and whom, though he has ceased to love, he feels bound to search after, and succour and protect. He makes all the investigations that are possible without betraying his secret to the world; but private inquiries and carefully-worded newspaper advertisements prove alike futile, and from the day on which she fled from Fretterley the fate of Myra to Eric Keir is wrapt in dark uncertainty.

*(To be continued.)*

## IN WINTER.

OH, Robin, why dost sing?  
Are not the last poor blossoms of the rose  
Sodden and dead? and all the lilies too,  
Which, like tall angel sentinels, have stood  
Guarding a plot of green the summer thro'?

Even the leaves drop down,

Writhen and brown,

As if they died in agony; red beech,  
And tawny chestnut fans, scorched by the breath  
Of Autumn's burning kisses laid on each.

Oh, winter sun, why shine?

Are not the deepest bowers laid dead and bare  
Where thou wast wont to peep? and o'er, alas!

Is all thy pretty play of hide and seek,  
Among the nodding leaves and bearded grass!

Over the hoary wood

In angry mood

Thou gazest with a red and sullen eye,  
Touching the barren boughs with scornful fire,  
While with long-gathering moan the wind sweeps by.

Oh, violet, why bloom?

False prophet of the spring, thou ventur'st forth,  
Telling the heart of fitful April hours!

Scentless, thou droop'st to the ice-bound earth,  
A pallid ghost among the blackened flowers.

The very pool lies dead

While overhead

Gray misty snow-clouds darken all the air  
And spectre birds flit noiseless thro' the sky,  
Seeking their frozen nests in dumb despair.

A. L. L.



## THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

'CHARLES I.' AT THE LYCEUM—THEATRICAL CRITICISM—THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER—SIR BALDWIN LEIGHTON—WORKING MEN—SERMONS—THE IMPENDING SESSION—MEN AND MEASURES—THE PROFESSION OF POLITICS.

IT is now about three months ago that a play by Mr. W. G. Wills, entitled 'Charles I.,' was presented to the public on the boards of the Lyceum Theatre. The piece was enthusiastically received. The newspaper critics gushed over in a flood of ecstasies. The management issued leaflets epitomising the 'Opinions of the London Press.' The advertisements in the 'Times' drew our attention to this 'noble' and 'beautiful' drama, and bespoke our attention to the actor's great delineation of the 'Martyr King.' The programme of the Lyceum Theatre is still unchanged, and therefore we may fairly conclude that, at all events, in a pecuniary point of view, the play is an unqualified success. In fact, 'Charles I.,' during the dull months of last year, became the Talk of the Town, and therefore it is my bounden duty to say a word or two about it. In the first place, then, let me congratulate the author on having written a dialogue which, from a literary stand-point, is far beyond the efforts of our popular dramatists, and which induces a hope that taste is not wholly deadened, and that there is some chance that superior acquirements and refined phraseology are not altogether lost upon the English stage. On the same boards, some three years ago, Lord Lytton's latest dramatic production, 'The Rightful Heir,' seemed to promise the resurrection of a higher class of dramatic composition, and in that excellently-written and remarkably well-acted play we, the paying

play-goers, began to think that the time was coming when a visit to the theatre might really afford us an intellectual treat. Like most sublunary hopes, however, the expectation was not fulfilled, and 'The Rightful Heir' was gathered to his fathers, and his house left untenanted. Claimants certainly appeared, but the verdict of the public effectually deprived them of the honours to which they aspired, and the dramatic compilations had to rest content with being called a 'piece,' and were never honoured with the name of 'play.' It is full of deep significance that no author in recent years has ventured to write, and no management ventured to produce, a tragedy. Of course, I except all Shaksperian revivals; but how is it that we see nothing like 'The Gamester,' or 'A New Way to Pay Old Debts?' Even 'The Hunchback' still retains its superiority. Surely the dramatic giants of comparatively recent years have not vanished from the earth, like the sons of Anak! Surely, in these days of literary power and activity, there must be some intellects that are capable of treading the paths of Sheridan and Knowles. Are we to believe that dramatic genius is nurtured only in Paris, and that England is wholly incapable of bringing forth any such writers as Victorien Sardou, Barrière, and Thibout— to say nothing of De Musset, and Octave Feuillet? Granted that, owing to social conventionalities, the motive of these French authors is inexorably denied to us, are we to believe that we can find no

genius here at home incapable of constructing plays and writing conversations that are not based upon breaches of the seventh Commandment? Well, Mr. Wills throws down his challenge, and his admirers in the daily press require us to recognize in him a dramatic author of supereminent ability and unrivalled powers. I cannot help thinking that it was not a blush of satisfied delight that warmed Mr. Wills' cheeks when he read the fulsome comments on his play that appeared here, there, and everywhere in the London journals, after the production of 'Charles I.' He may not unnaturally have sighed over his breakfast-table, Save me from my friends! Behind the journalistic scenes as he is, it is more than possible that he must have felt that his critics were 'coming it a little too strong,' and that the drama written up for one particular actor would have found its proper place, and its just balance in the scales of merit, without the false weights of undue adulation that accompanied its first representation. As a play, it is unexceptionably feeble; it creates no interest in the mind of the spectator; it awakens no sympathy save, in the last act, for a man who is cruelly separated from his wife, and even at this point the author gives no room for displaying the anguish of the royal consort; and the climax of the drama is almost as great an anti-climax as can be well conceived. The mysterious last word of Charles spoken upon the scaffold to Bishop Juxon—*Remember*—is made by Mr. Wills to be spoken to the queen with reference to a miniature the king wears round his neck; and here, I think, the author may share with Dr. Manning's epigram upon the doctrine of Papal Infallibility the glory of having

'triumphed over history.' We are expected to believe, by the incident that brings down the curtain upon the second act, that Cromwell positively intended to murder Charles with his own hands after an interview in Whitehall! and half-a-dozen unmistakable supers in buff are palmed off upon us as the 'loyal gentlemen of the Inns of Court!' Then we have a personage in the shape of Lady Eleanor Davys, whose historical existence may possibly be vouched for by some dim record in the British Museum, who occasionally appears in the shape of a *confidante* to the queen, and utters some incomprehensible remarks upon the conjunction of Mars and Saturn, and other abstruse astrological observations, for no purpose whatever. Her appearance, at certain intervals, is not connected with the action of the drama in the most remote degree. She has not one thousandth part of the importance of Peter of Pomfret, or the Soothsayer in 'Julius Cæsar.' And the greatest blunder of a playwright is to introduce a character which has not some connection, however remote, with the story he presents in a dramatic form. Again, the villainy of Moray is but half worked out. The author seems to have had greater qualms about this business than the Scotch laird, despite his 'itching palm.' Miss Isabel Bateman's performance of the Queen is, I am delighted to admit, fascinating in the extreme; but why, O why, does she affect a French accent in some of her speeches, and not in others? She reminds us too much of Mr. Vining's shortcomings in this respect in his performance of 'Count Fosco' in the 'Woman in White;' and, for the sake of travelled ears, it would have been far better that she had not been given French

lines to speak. Her occasional broken English certainly informed us that she was meant to be French, but her French accent as certainly informed us that she was undoubtedly English. Of Mr. Belmore's 'Cromwell' I can only say that nothing but real art and extreme caution could make the part even tolerable, and Mr. Belmore's talents were never before put to so severe a test, and they have stood the trial admirably. But what a Cromwell has Mr. Wills created! Whatever may be our opinions as to the Protector's politics, and however much we may dislike the character of the man, we cannot refuse to own that he possessed genius and abilities—qualities which are altogether wanting in the truculent little snob with whom Mr. Wills has padded his play. 'Sheer dramatic necessity'—the painful plea which is urged upon the play-bill—cannot excuse the dramatist for holding up to public hatred, contempt, and ridicule, a man who, with all his faults, was immeasurably the superior of the weak-minded and miserable monarch. It is no part of my duty, even if it was my desire, to apologize for the conduct of the mighty rebel; but even the most unflinching royalist need not be ashamed to own, that while Charles may command our compassion, Cromwell deserves a dignified remembrance. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Wills has thrown away a splendid opportunity in not having made the usurper share stage honours with the king; he might then have achieved a dramatic triumph of far higher worth than is to be found in the ovations of indiscriminating theatrical reporters. Of course, it is urged, in reply to any such objection, that Mr. Wills' intention was to make Charles the all-important

figure, and that he has attained the desired result. If this be so, I own that I find some difficulty in discovering wherein consists the 'nobility' of the play. For if the play was written merely with the view of supplying a particular actor with a part, we may be pardoned if we venture to criticise the critics, and express some misgivings as to how far their adulatory epithets are justifiable. It is as great a mistake to condemn a play on account of the incompetence of the actors, as it is to pronounce it a masterpiece because it affords an opportunity for the display of histrionic genius. However, I have no desire to seem captious where all are, apparently, so well contented, and I will only say, that if Mr. Irving is indebted to Mr. Wills, the amount is more than cancelled by Mr. Wills' obligations to Mr. Irving. Of this actor's talents it is almost impossible to speak too highly. When I first saw him in 'Hunted Down,' at the St. James's Theatre, some years ago, I felt sure that he was destined to arrive at the high position he now occupies; and I have no hesitation in pronouncing him to be the ablest actor on the English stage. To watch him from the stalls is always an intellectual treat, and I hope I shall not be thought guilty of gross bad taste, when I say that his 'Digby Grand' is as superior to his 'Charles I.' as his 'Matthias' is to either—and his 'Charles I.' is admirable.

Let me add a word or two upon theatrical criticism. As one of the play-going public, I am bound to say that I often have been most painfully deceived by the notices of hero dramas that I have read in the daily journals. I have known plays puffed up to the skies by the unanimous breath of the 'critics,' which have proved to be

the most commonplace stuff, and which have soon gone out like a fire-balloon, and are seen no more. I have known other plays as unanimously condemned, which have run their hundred nights, and proved to be, to all pecuniarily concerned, a great success. Now, we outsiders are, not unnaturally, a little surprised at this, and, after some experience, we are compelled to feel some hesitation in accepting the reports we read. We all know that the *Talk of the Town* is apt to be censorious, and, no doubt, in certain instances, it cannot fail to be unjust. Therefore we receive with caution its gossip that 'critics' are venal, and that an eulogistic notice of a new play may be secured by a little manœuvring on the part of the author or the management, or that sharp and disagreeable reports are due to personal hostility or other unworthy motives. Such things are said, and of course we are bound to remember that critics are but men, and may possibly be swayed by influences which are not altogether legitimate. Such arguments I put on one side, and content myself with observing that it is worth considering whether the first representation of a play affords proper opportunities for fair criticism. It is tolerably well known by all those who take an interest in such matters, that those who have the government of the London theatres are not as particular as they might, and ought to be, in the matter of rehearsals. Consequently, it is not unfrequently ten days or a fortnight after the first public representation that either author or actors are fairly amenable to detailed criticism. Of course this ought not to be the case, but we must accept the facts; and the only person who really deserves criticism on the first night is the

manager. Without, then, desiring to throw too hard work upon that deserving class of public servants, the theatrical critics, I would throw out the suggestion that they should perform their duty by merely briefly recording their general impressions of a new play immediately upon its first representation, and that they should reserve their detailed remarks for a subsequent visit, when they certainly would be in a better position to give a fair and candid opinion. Besides, we may entertain some doubt as to the value of a criticism which is necessarily written hurriedly, late at night, in order to be in time for the next morning's impression.

During the 'silly season' the agricultural labourer came prominently to the fore. It is astonishing what a quantity of excellent persons are to be found whose mission in life appears to be to discover the wrongs of their humbler neighbours. Not content with parading the social shortcomings with which we are all, unfortunately, only too intimately acquainted, such persons are apt to draw upon their imaginations for the creation of future possible wrongs, and to treat them as if they actually existed. No doubt it is, in many cases, a very wise thing to prepare for the worst. If you wish for peace, prepare for war, is an ancient adage, though it is not one likely to find much favour with the present Humble Pie Administration (I thank thee, 'Pall Mall Gazette,' for teaching me that word!). But still, it is pressing the principle a little too far, if you persistently raise up in the minds of a certain class of men the idea of an injury which does not exist as yet, and may never take substantial form; for, unhappily, there are very few in-

dividuals who have to work, and work hard, for their livelihood who cannot be easily persuaded that they are unjustly used, and that they have a right to demand, in an imperative manner, that society, sometime or other, shall place them in a more luxurious position. The state of the agricultural labourer, we are gravely assured, is one of almost absolute serfdom; and something ought to be done to give him a chance, if not of altogether equalling the territorial landlord, at least of rivalling his immediate master, the farmer who employs him. The real question, of course, is, 'What can the most eager philanthropist really do? This is essentially an age of competition, and everybody, according to the accidents of his birth, which no amount of social-improvement theories can possibly regulate, has his chance, such as it may be, of distancing his neighbours and compeers. The happiness of life is eminently relative; and we may be excused if we say that the ploughman on fourteen shillings a week enjoys his existence quite as much as the skilled mechanic at forty, and probably far more than the miner and collier at thirty. The blessings of health and fresh air, with field-labour and low wages, may be fairly set against close confinement, and consequent ill-health, and high remuneration. Wealth cannot be attained in these days, even in a comparative degree, without a proportionate amount of toil, and millionnaires may have to pass through a furnace of mental anxiety such as the compassionated Hodge is absolutely free from. Sir Baldwyn Leighton has published an excellent little pamphlet entitled, 'The Farm Labourer in 1872,' but the argument amounts to this—that farm-labourers should be treated as

human beings, and that, instead of a high scale of wages, a bonus should be given them on the substantial proof of the excellence of their work as apparent by practical results; that is to say, always remember that a man is a man, and let him see some tangible and substantial reason for taking an interest in his work. Pay a man so much a week to do certain work, and he will do it—after a fashion, tolerably well, no doubt, if he has reason to fear that he will be dismissed with a bad character if he is caught idling; but he will do the same work a hundred per cent. better at less wages, if he is assured of extra payment on the excellent results of his labour. The existence of trades-unionism may be the logical outcome of the shortsightedness of employers, but it is most fatal to the advancement of individual unionists. It is based upon the utterly-false assumption that one workman is as good as another, and it is surprising that the intelligent mechanic is still so blind to the fact, that for the sake of securing a rise of a shilling or two of wages per week, he sacrifices his opportunities of asserting the worth of his capabilities above the dead-level of the incompetence of idler and inferior associates. Trades-unions, in point of fact, are organized for the sake of the least intelligent and least laborious members of the community; and it is they, and they alone, who reap the benefits thereby. I cannot forbear quoting, at this point, Sir Baldwyn Leighton's sensible remarks: 'Up to the end of the last century, or even within fifty years past in some towns, there were associations of trades, called guilds, partaking of the nature of trades-unions, but differing from the modern aspect of trades-unionism in these important

particulars: first, they were associations of employers and employées, both working harmoniously together to their mutual advantage; secondly, the condition of fellowship in the guild was, that a workman should do his work well and truly; and thirdly, the workman took some share of the profits of the trade. The objects of modern unionism, on the contrary, seem to be to array employer and employed against each other, thereby causing enormous waste and loss to them chiefly, and to the world at large indirectly, instead of all sharing the profits of increased demand; and, furthermore, to encourage bad work for what is erroneously called the good of trade. You cannot compare an old house, or an old piece of furniture, or even an old brick, with its modern substitute, without perceiving what we have lost in good workmanship, which means Truth and Honesty, and something more than mechanical skill.

One word to those miry demagogues who are perpetually declaiming about the 'working man,' describing him as the bone and sinew of England, and so forth. Are there no 'working men' besides those who, for a certain number of hours out of the twenty-four, are exercising their muscles in manual labour? Does no one 'work' except the artisan and labourer? Are there not in our great cities, thousands of 'working men' whose mental toil is protracted long after the hardy son of the soil is fast asleep and snoring? Where would the 'working man' be if the brains of his employer were not perpetually at work, devising new schemes and planning channels which the 'working man' must dig? Is not the toil of the physician, the lawyer, the clergyman

—and few realize how hard the English clergy are worked—the statesman, the literary man, fully deserving of the name of 'work'? Go farther; take the great landlord with his thousands of acres, has he no responsibilities, no cares? Ah! my good Radical friend, 'nationalise' the land—fulfil your dream of universal equality, give everybody five hundred a year, and go mad in wondering what you are to do with society then!

Perhaps we ought to congratulate ourselves that during the 'silly season' above mentioned we were spared the usual letters in the 'Times' on the subject of long sermons. Afflicted laymen have generally found an outlet at that season for the exasperation which they have long pent up at being compelled on Sundays to listen to at least one essay composed of highly-watered theological milk. With these complainants I have the deepest sympathy, but I have always felt that their complaints were not sincere, for the remedy lay so obviously in their own hands. Nobody is bound to remain in church to listen to a sermon, if he would rather not; and it is much to be regretted that arrangements are not made whereby the services and sermons may be made independent of each other. I have often tried to find out whence comes that extraordinary passion for sermons that seems inseparable from the nature of our countrymen. Poor people in a country parish think nothing at all of the parson if he does not give them two long discourses per Sunday. I find it impossible to believe that such people take in one-tenth part of what is said to them, and yet they would be very much annoyed if they did not, at all events, get the chance of comprehending the



other nine-tenths. Happy folk, that evidently are not critical, unless some aggrieved parishioner shrieks that popery is preached in the parish pulpit, and then the rustic orthodoxy stands stoutly on its guard. Now, it is no disrespect to the clergy of the Established Church to say that, as a rule, they are but indifferent preachers; they are perfectly aware of the fact, and frequently own it with sincere regret. The fault, in my opinion, rests not so much with them as with the ecclesiastical system which is so outrageously conservative of worn-out traditions—traditions of practice, I mean, not of doctrine; that it is no business of mine to touch upon in these pages, remembering the lines of Pope:

'Nay, fly to altars, there they'll talk  
you dead,  
For fools rush in where angels fear  
to tread!'

It is no easy task to write a theological essay once or twice every week that will take half an hour to deliver, and at the same time be quite worth listening to. The clergy of the English Church are allowed to run wildly—or tamely, as the case may be—in the pulpit the moment they are ordained deacons, wholly irrespective of their individual capacities, and entirely regardless of their knowledge of the infinite workings of the human heart and mind, without which no one can hope to be a really great preacher. Bishops would confer a signal favour upon the long-suffering laity, if they would refuse to admit the young clergy to preach until they had served their office for some time, and were in a position to lecture people older, and sometimes wiser, than themselves. The universities would none the less deserve our gratitude if they

would establish schools of elocution, and give the public orator some private work to do. It is astonishing that, considering how much preaching is thought of amongst us, no substantial effort is made towards improving the delivery of sermons. We all know how a good preacher can rivet the attention of his congregation, but why should this be left entirely to natural gifts? For if only natural qualities can confer a fluent eloquence, the clergyman who delivers a written essay might, at all events, be taught how to compose English words, and how to read them clearly, and emphatically. If something of this kind is not done soon, we, the hitherto patient hearers, shall be compelled, in self-defence, to retire politely at the conclusion of divine worship, and leave the preacher to exhort the empty pews.

The time for the reassembling of British senators is now not very far off, and for the divisions in the Liberal camp there are great searchings of heart. It does not need ripened age, or curious acquaintance with the journalism of the last generation, to be aware that politics, as such, do not command, among the vast majority of citizens, the same anxious consideration as in the days of yore. The reflective portion of educated society does not care to range itself blindly and unconditionally upon the side of any political party in the state. We have learned that there is a good deal to be said for the peculiarities of each, and we see pretty clearly that all parties are tending to extremes which the well-regulated mind of a sober man is anxious to avoid. We cannot go so far as to hope that there is any immediate prospect of the formation of a common-sense party such as

Mr. Tennyson vaguely foreshadowed in a line or two of 'Locksley Hall,' because we are tacitly aware that each individual of us has his mad points which forbid the coalition of plain and practical wisdom; and we know that genius, which is so irrepressible, and *must* rear its head above the surface, as far as regards the golden mean, is invariably more or less insane. Still, we are beginning to ask ourselves what is the advantage of pinning our unhesitating faith on any one man, and whether it is not rather a sign of unintentional dishonesty, or intellectual weakness, when a hustings candidate declares himself prepared to follow Mr. So-and-so, the Minister, through thick and thin. Through slow and painful experiences, we are steadily acquiring the conviction that men must be judged by their measures, and that temporary political success is not always a sure gauge of true political capacity. The profession of politics is not what it was; and while we may congratulate ourselves upon having nearly got rid of the clever adventurer, we may well ask ourselves whether we are satisfied with a parliament composed, to a very considerable extent, of men whose chief qualification for their high and responsible position is their wealth. Can any one doubt but that there are hundreds of men living now in quiet obscurity who are far more fitted for the performance of legislative functions than the vast majority of those in whose hands are now placed the honour and the interest of the British Empire? And is it not further a matter for regret that such men are contented with their humbler spheres; and, if they were ever so uneasy, and

hungered with never so great ambition, they simply could not afford to be Members of Parliament? It is not merely the cost of an election that keeps such men in the background, and permits them only to criticise the acts of the government through the medium of the daily press; but it is the knowledge that if you have once attained the position of being able to write M.P. after your name, you are expected, in one way or another, to pay for the privilege by a considerably increased expenditure every year. Whether the Ballot Bill has really lessened election expenditure, legitimate and illegitimate, is a question that cannot be answered yet, though we may entertain the hope that that, combined with the Corrupt Practices Act, has rendered for ever impossible the charges, which once were counted by thousands, that attended the admission into the Commons House at Westminster. We know, as a fact, that a Member of Parliament must have something more than a merely modest competence at his command. Hitherto, Reform Bills have only had regard to the free and independent electors—would it be too much to ask that their representatives should be accorded some further degree of enfranchisement? Till this is done, the candidate has no chance of possessing the same degree of freedom as the elector.

At this traditionally joyous season of the year, however, I take off my hat and say to all the members of the Government—especially to my esteemed friend, Mr. Ayrton—A happy new year! with the addition of a wish that they may get it.

FREE LANCE.

